



Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 59 – November 2003

A HISTORY OF THE DUBLIN RIDING AND WALKING CLUB

Most of the available sources cite 1913 as the year of the Club's founding and the Honorable Franklin MacVeagh as its founder. If that is so, this year is the Club's 90th anniversary. There is, however, some doubt as to the date of founding, as there are no formal records before 1919. The First World War may have curtailed activity during part of that period.

At any rate, a meeting was held on September 28, 1919 at the home of Mrs. John Lawrence Mauran for the purpose of "reorganizing" the Riding and Walking Club. There was a vote of thanks to Mr. George B. Leighton for his stewardship of the Club as Chairman of the Executive Committee in the (unspecified) preceding years. Dr. Burton Russell was elected President, Mrs. Mauran Vice-President, Mr. Henry Leighton, Treasurer, and Miss Agnes Troup, Secretary. Besides the officers, Messrs. Franklin MacVeagh, Raphael Pumpelly, George Luther Foote, and George B. Leighton were elected to the Executive Committee.

It was a very close knit group, all summer folk, and many of them related to one another. George Foote, for example, was Dr. Russell's son-in-law. The running of the Club was to remain in their hands for many years. Miss Troup served as Secretary until 1952 and Mrs. Mauran was Vice-President almost as long. George Foote succeeded his father-in-law as President in 1927 and served until 1947.

Building and Maintaining Trails

In 1920 the Club appealed for funds to restore the trails and bridle paths, which had suffered from neglect due "to the absence of many members during the war, and to the difficulty of obtaining labor". The appeal for \$500 vaunted the "unique system of paths,



Dr. Burton Russell

about fifty miles in length", which had been "thrown open to the riders and walkers of Dublin, giving them the opportunity of escaping from the highways with their ever increasing motor traffic" and encouraged membership in the Club at \$10 per family. Maintenance of the trail system was to be a constant effort of the Club, and the income from dues, horse shows, and other fund-raising activities was largely devoted to that effort. Through the efforts of Jasper Whiting, an energetic head of the Trails Committee, trails were constructed from the Old Troy Road to the Old Marlborough Road, over Spaulding Hill, and, crossing the Keene Road, to the Eliza Adams Gorge. These trails now form part of the Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway.

The Club published its first map of the fifty-mile trail system in 1921. At that point, and for much of the next forty years, it was largely an equestrian-centered organization. Many members had stables and others could rent horses and have lessons from a succession of instructors who, during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, also provided the horses.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Mark your calendar for the winter potluck meeting, which will be February 13 at The Dublin Community Church Vestry (snow date February 20.) We will send out details in a postcard at the end of January.





Phyllis Gerry [Williams] at the 1935 Horseshow

By 1922 there were 88 members. The flavor of Club life appears in Agnes Troup's account of a typical event. Her minutes say "The first meet of the Riding and Walking Club was at the Dublin Lake Club at 10:00 a.m. August 22nd. There were 20 in all on horseback. We went over the Harry Green Trail to the Mountain Pasture where we had the first check. Thence to the Learned place for the second check. Thence past the Harrington Farm back on the Jaffrey Road and through Mrs. Musgrave's trails for the third check at her house and a stirrup cup. Thence to Franklin MacVeagh's residence for luncheon where we were joined by the few who did not ride."

More thought was being given to walkers, however, and by 1929, under the auspices of Jasper Whiting, the Club began publishing a booklet entitled "Dublin Walks". The foreword of the 1929 edition stated that the teas following the walks were for "walkers only". The 1930 edition elaborated on the aims of the Club and concluded: "Club rides and Club walks are arranged

from time to time by a committee appointed for the purpose and a Horse Show is usually given in the early autumn to which the public is invited." These horse shows were major fund raisers, the proceeds going towards trail maintenance and charity. Between them the shows of 1929 and 1930 raised \$3,000, of which \$1,000 was given to the Humane Society as a memorial to Dr. Russell.

Fundraising Activities

In spite of these efforts Miss Troup's minutes for one of the executive committee meetings in 1932 stated: "rides and walks with tea were not as popular as hoped, the riders preferring competition." This feeling seems to have been addressed in 1936, when the season started with a 5:45 a.m. bird walk and continued with a ride and walk, a gymkhana, a paper chase, and the horse show. The 1937 and 1938 schedules were similar, except that there were no big horse shows. In their place the Club resorted to other forms of fund raising. In 1937 there

was a dinner with a cabaret, which raised \$400. In 1938 a cabaret and dance raised \$454. There was a "small horse show" that year, probably meaning that all participants were local. Jasper Whiting devised another fund raiser in 1939 in the form of a "punch board", essentially a raffle, with a dog as the first prize. To quote Miss Troup, "As the dog had not been purchased, the winner most generously asked that the money donated for that purpose should be given to the Club." The punch board raised \$809. Other suggestions for fund raising included boxing matches and dog shows. These may seem far fetched, but the Club was serious about raising money.

Horse shows and gymkhanas were always held on Franklin MacVeagh's field, now Friendship Field. The horse shows probably reached the peak of their social prestige during the Depression years, when participants came from Boston and New York and prizes were contributed by the likes of Abercrombie & Fitch. But 1936 was the last big one before the War.

Riding instructors during this period varied in popularity. A Mrs. Badger was here for several years but ran into criticism in 1938, some members complaining "she only teaches the forward seat". In 1941 Mrs Albin Schoepf "expressed a wish that Mrs. Badger could teach, or at least tolerate, the Park as well as the Santini." Evidently Mrs. Badger didn't listen. Lu (Schoepf) Hewitt remembers this well, but says there was some irony in her mother's wish, as "she hated horses" and, when pressed to join the rest of the family riding, tolerated it for only three months. During the 1930's horses were stabled at the Jeffrey Parsons' place, where there was a ring and where the instructor gave lessons. In 1938 Mr. Parsons sold his place and the Club rented stables on the MacVeagh field from Eames MacVeagh. Riding instructors during this period varied in their popularity.

The 1938 season ended violently with the famously destruc-

It's the time of year to renew your membership. Your dues and donations are what make possible the day-to-day work of preserving Dublin's history. Each year we process and catalog hundreds of documents, photographs and objects related to Dublin. For this work we have to buy acid-free boxes and folders, mylar photograph sleeves, acid-free paper, and many other kinds of supplies, from printer cartridges to paper clips. Your dues also pay for utilities, printing, postage. We could not send out this newsletter without your help.

— Paul Tuller, President



Rufus Hale at the 1965 Horseshow

tive hurricane, which reduced the fifty miles of trails to a mess of fallen trees and destroyed bridges. The cost of repairing the damage in 1939 came to \$420. Some help did come from the Civilian Conservation Corps, but the cleanup efforts continued to affect the Club's budget to such an extent that in both 1940 and 1941 the Club ran small deficits. In those two years there were no fund raising "entertainments".

During the War, although there were no instructors, the Club did schedule several events each year, such as picnics, teas, breakfasts, and one hay ride. To complicate Mr. Foote's life there was also a labor shortage and, in 1943, a devastating ice storm. Fortunately the Club was able to call on volunteers (including Mrs. Mauran's chauffeur). In 1945 there was an abortive inquiry into the possibility of using prisoners of war on the trails.

Problems with the Riding Program

In 1947, when Lyneham Crocker succeeded George Foote as President, there were no horses and no instructor. In fact, the supply of horses and instructors remained spotty until 1950, when two events occurred that were to determine the Club's course for the next twenty-five years. First, Robb Sagendorph, who had bought the MacVeagh field, offered it to the Club free of charge. His offer was declined and he subsequently sold it to Aimé Metivier, who renamed it "Friendship Field". Metivier gave lessons there and ran his own horse shows, but also rented it to the Riding & Walking Club for its annual show. Faced with the loss of the stable at the field, Lyneham Crocker

approached Dr. Francis Weille to see if the Club could use his stables on East Lake Road. Dr. Weille not only agreed but made the hayloft habitable for instructors by installing plumbing and a shower. This arrangement continued until 1975.

Rufus Hale became President in 1955, and the Club scheduled weekly events during the summer. Mr. Hale's enthusiasm, energy, and expertise gave the Club new vigor. Membership during these years increased rapidly - from 37 in 1950, to 79 in 1958. In fact, of this total 56 were family memberships and the true total was probably around 140 individuals.

Drag hunts were held in 1958 and 1959 on Dr. Kenneth Warren's land with six harrier hounds chasing a piece of cloth impregnated with fox odor. At the same time efforts were made to attract and entertain walkers. The schedule promised monthly "get-togethers", but by 1959 the popularity of the walks resulted in what was to become the standard pattern of teas and picnics preceded by walks and rides. By 1962 each picnic or tea was attended by up to 82 people with walkers now in the majority. Typically there would be 30 walkers and 10 to 15 riders, plus, as is the case today, 30 to 40 "sitters". A driving force in promoting the walkers' interests and in maintaining the network of trails was Albert Wolfe who remained active in the Club as treasurer and/or trail master almost until his death in 1998.

In 1964 Henry Lee took on the difficult job of replacing Rufus Hale. Although Henry has never been a horseman, he was the parent of two children who loved riding. He was also the son of a well known amateur steeple chase rider and so had been around horses much of his life. He purchased Friendship Field in 1965 and assured the Club that they would always have a venue for horse shows and riding lessons.

Henry Lee may not have been aware, when he became presi-



Rufus Hale, Henry Lee and Isabel Pratt giving out the summer's prizes at Abe Wolfe's house, 1972

dent, that part of his duties would include mucking out the stables. The unexplained absence of the instructor, who should have cleaned the stalls, on the evening of a Lake Club dance, forced the President, in full evening garb, to do the job. Mr. Lee says that no woman would dance with him that evening. The instructor did not return the following year.

During the ensuing years, horse-related activities continued in abundance and the annual horse shows attracted large numbers of entries and a big attendance. All was not well, however. The revenue from horse rentals and riding lessons was declining. In 1967, to make up for this loss, the first annual benefit dance, co-sponsored with the Dublin Sailing Club, took place and was a big success. For many years the profits from these dances helped the Club maintain the trail system and run the stable.

Walking Comes to the Fore

The first annual Columbus Day picnic at Dark Pond was held in 1969, a custom originated by Henry Lee that continues to this day. The same year the Club lost a valued member in Mrs. William King who had served for 40 years in various capacities. Mrs. King was Mrs. Mauran's younger daughter and mother of the late Betsy Bernier. The thread of family connections with the Club continued in the later years when Mrs. King's niece, Isabel Pratt, served as Secretary, Isabel's husband, Herbert, as President, and their daughter, Laurie, as riding instructor.

A sign of times to come occurred in 1972 when the first two "special walks" - serious hikes of several miles - were scheduled. These were led by two gentlemen who were to be very important in the Club's history, Samuel Spiker and Woodbridge [Woody] Constant. The special walks were an indication of the growing importance to the Club of its walkers.

The following year Henry Lee passed the reins to Susan [Tudie]

von Stade, Dr. Russell's granddaughter. In an effort to broaden its membership base, the Club that year stated publicly that membership was open to anyone who wished to join. Activities in 1974 continued much as before with picnics, a gymkhana / cook-out, the horse show, a very profitable dance, as well as two all-day rides and an overnight camp-out for riders.

Rufus Hale died in August of that year, just before the annual meeting, at which Henry Lee said of him, "For more than forty years he served as committee member, director, president, and chairman of the board. Over much of that time he was its moving spirit, his name almost synonymous with riding in Dublin."

Another blow came that fall with the death of Dr. Weille. The twenty-five year use of his stables came to an end. The Weille stables were replaced in 1975 by the existing, though inadequate, stable at Friendship Field. By 1976 the picnic walks, except for the annual meeting, were for walkers and "sitters" only. The stable was down to three horses from the usual five or six, but there was a full program of riding events including the horse show.

Times were, however, changing. During the following two years the deficits from the stable operation confronted the Club with the necessity of re-evaluating its position. Profits from the dances did not come close to covering the losses and, as a letter from the president stated succinctly "our problem is solely the renting and looking after hay burners". When sounded out about the possibility of his becoming president, Sam Spiker replied, "I could not and would not become president of an organization permanently involved with horses, beasts I do not understand and am not really familiar with."

Competition from year-round horse operations like the Monadnock Pony Club and Honey Lane Stables, as well as the attractions of Lake Club activities, pretty much meant that only

2004 Dublin Town Calendar

A calendar featuring photographs of historic buildings on Main Street in Dublin will be available for sale before Christmas. It will show vintage pictures of a number of buildings in town, some of which are no longer standing. Plan to fill every stocking on your list with this piece of Dublin history.

January 2004

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sub-teen children were using the stable. President von Stade circularized the membership for their opinions, sending out over one hundred letters to which she received six replies and only three from riding families. As a consequence, the Board voted to suspend operation of the stable for the 1979 season.

In 1979 Tудie von Stade handed the presidency over to Herbert Pratt and the present pattern of alternating special and picnic walks began. Tудie's term had seen the slow decline of the importance of riding, which she had dealt with realistically. She had been able to count on her treasurer, Nancy Perkins, for support and, above all, wry good humor, which must have helped.

Bert Pratt's presidency was very brief as he died in the spring of 1983. However, he was persuaded during the summer of 1982 to schedule a six-week operation of the stable at Friendship Field, under the guidance of Mrs. Charles Moody [Geddy], using horses borrowed from members. The operation lost \$2,000. There would no longer be any formal Club connection with riding. Perhaps because of this, membership decreased to 93, from a high of 120 in 1967.

Modern Times

By 1984 membership began to recover and the Club assumed the pattern of activities that persists today. The scholarship program was started that funds summer camp for Dublin children, growing, under the leadership of Mrs. Thomas Wright [Story], to an annual contribution of over \$3,000. This would not have been possible had the stable continued to drain funds. Vice-President Nancy Carter began the inclusion of bikers on the picnic walks. Under her guidance, and subsequently, that of Dr. Augustus Crocker, it was an option for several years and still, occasionally, attracts a few dedicated bikers. Abe Wolfe, after a gap of twenty years, took over as trail master and, during the winter of 1985, Club members participated in the first winter events - cross country skiing followed by tea at a member's home. That summer, Sam Spiker was honored for his twenty years of devotion to the Club. The next year Woody Constant, Abe Wolfe, and Tудie von Stade were similarly recognized.

Nancy Carter succeeded Bill Boozer as President in 1988. Nancy's enthusiasm for biking and cross country skiing set the tone of the Club during her tenure. At the same time, the Club had

to recognize that its membership was aging. A proposed statement of long-range goals stated: "We recognize that we are almost entirely a riding, walking, and cross country skiing club for 'seniors' or 'near seniors'". During the last few years there has been a gradual increase in the number of middle-aged members, but not many under 40 have joined.

In 1991 Nancy Carter moved to Oregon and Michael Carter (no relation) was elected President. Blake Sabine became secretary and ended up with almost permanent duty supplying the picnic walks with refreshments. Bruce McClellan was the trails master and George Morrison took on the special walks. That same year the Club donated a basket stretcher to Monadnock State Park. Almost immediately it was used to rescue a badly injured climber. Michael Carter was president until the annual meeting in 1998 when, for the first time, co-presidents were elected, Mrs. John Harris [Betsey], and Mrs. Michael Crowley [Wendy].

In 2003 Betsey Harris retired and was replaced by Mrs. Rufus Frost [Mary]. Betsey Harris has had a long association with the Club, starting as a rider, then a walker, and, very importantly, a cross country skier. Wendy Crowley is the Club's walker-in-chief and Mary Frost, as befits the niece-in-law of Rufus Hale, is the first president since Tудie von Stade to be a rider.

During the last 12 years the Club has remained what it had become in 1984: an organization devoted, first, to enjoying the outdoors in a variety of activities, second, to giving the children of Dublin an opportunity to experience summer camp, and, third, to maintaining the legacy of those many miles of trails for the use of walkers and riders. As an end note it should be added that riding did not disappear in Dublin; there are still members with horses and they still attend the occasional picnic.

— Michael C. Carter



Picnic at the de Marneffe's, 1999

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Educational Outreach

On October 13th, Bruce Fox's 8th Grade class from South Meadow School in Peterborough, which has been studying the history of the Civil War, paid a visit to several Dublin sites. Their first stop was the Civil War monument on the lawn of the 1841 schoolhouse, where they read the names of the twenty-five Dublin men who gave their lives in that conflict.

They then paid a visit to the Archives, where Nancy Campbell had laid out our impressive collection of Civil War artifacts and documents, many of which relate to those whose names are on the monument. Their last stop was the Cemetery, where they visited nine of the numerous graves of Dublin's Civil War veterans. The hope is that these visits brought home the reality of what the students have been studying in the classroom.

Recent Accessions

Gifts to the Archives since the May newsletter have been so numerous (eight pages in the accessions book) that we can report only the highlights, but we are not the less grateful for each one of them.

Memorabilia of the Hazen family, including the family bible and a number of Civil War items, were donated by **Joan M. Copley** of Winchester. Two Hazen brothers, Edson and George, died in the Civil War, and are inscribed on the Dublin monument. A third brother, Charles, an officer in the Third N.H. Volunteers, survived and lived out his life on what is now Grimes Hill Road in Harrisville. Among the donated items

are Charles's commission and saber and certificates of service for all three brothers.

Mary Grimes Doyle has given us a collection of papers and photographs of the Grimes and Doyle families, as well as a large number of items relating to other facets of Dublin life.

The former trustees of **Dublin Associates**, a business trust formed in 1928 and dissolved this year, have given us the trust's records. Similarly, we have been given the records of the **Northern New England Daffodil Show**, an offshoot of the Garden Club, which organized annual exhibitions from 1979 to 2003.

We have received a number of interesting items from the **Dublin Public Library**, including Thaddeus Mason, Jr.'s 1805 commission as a lieutenant in the N.H. militia.

Gordon Hayes has added to his many previous benefactions by giving us the certificate of Civil War service awarded to his great-grandfather, Edmund Quincy Sewall Greenwood.

A wealth of material on Beech Hill Hospital has been contributed by **Stephen Sexton** and **Thomas Taylor**.

Other recent benefactors include Anne Anable, Michael & Lillian Carter, Loring Catlin, Jr., Isabel Clukay, Bruce McClellan, Gisu Mohadger, John Nelson, Peterborough Historical Society, Claire Pyle and Walter Schnabel.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Dublin Historical Society is moving forward in many ways. After two years of fundraising and a successful grant application, we have raised enough money to begin the process of renovating our 1841 Schoolhouse museum on Main Street. The capital campaign has raised \$40,000 to date, with the help of many generous Historical Society members and other Dublin residents. We have also received a \$12,500 grant from the Samuel P. Hunt Foundation.

The building is scheduled to be lifted and moved forward twenty-five feet in mid-November by Geddes Building Movers. Once the building is in its final position, we will have a new foundation poured under it. The original granite stones that are the current foundation will be reset atop the new concrete walls to preserve the original look of the building. We have not reached our fundraising goal of \$75,000 but I thank everyone who has been so generous in the last two years. We will be working to complete the fundraising and the project in 2004.

— Paul Tuller

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.