



Dublin Historical Society

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THE WAY WE LIVED THEN *Eldercare Before RiverMead*

How to cope with the autumn years of life, the fading of physical and mental strength, has been a question since Adam and Eve flunked the test for immortality. Nowadays there are retirement villages, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and what the radio ads refer to discreetly as memory-loss apartments. For most of history, however, and in many cultures today, old people have had to rely on their children's affection, sense of duty, guilt, resignation or a mixture of all of these to see them through.

In early 19th century New England these matters were often dealt with in a hard-headed, businesslike way, with the child's duties and rewards spelled out in legally enforceable agreements. We are fortunate to have in our archives two examples from Dublin.

Artemas Piper's bond (1824)

On March 29, 1824, Solomon Piper (1754-1827), was 69 and Artemas, the youngest of his six surviving sons, was eleven days past his twenty-first birthday. On that day Solomon conveyed to Artemas a one-half undivided interest in the family farm. The consideration recited in Solomon's deed to Artemas was \$800. Simultaneously Artemas executed a bond in favor of his father in the sum of \$800, conditioned on the performance by Artemas of certain explicit obligations. The two \$800's balanced each other out, so no money changed hands. As enumerated in the bond, Artemas took on the following obligations:

How if the said Artemas Piper shall well and truly carry on said farm and fulfill all other agreements faithfully and seasonably without fraud or delay then this obligation to be void otherwise to remain in full force and virtue
Signed sealed and delivered
in presence of us
Shad. Morse
Thos. Piper

The last paragraph of Artemas Piper's bond, showing his signature.

- "to carry on the whole of said farm and manage the same agreeably to the rules of good husbandry during the natural life of the said Solomon"
- to "deliver to the said Solomon yearly and seasonally the one half of all the produce of every kind that shall be raised on said farm during said term excepting hay"
- "instead of delivering hay [Artemas] is to keep for the said Solomon the amount of four Cows and seven Sheep and be at half the expense of keeping shoeing and one half the taxes that shall be assessed on one horse"
- "to pay one half of all taxes that shall or may be lawfully assessed on said farm"

Annual Potluck Supper

February 13, 2004 – 6:30 p.m. • Vestry of the Community Church
(Snow date: February 21)

The program will be a discussion of objects selected from our collection and the stories behind them. William Lary will be helping to put some of the items in historical context. If you have Dublin related objects that you would like to share with the assembled group, please bring them along. Our discussion will focus on the stories connected to the objects rather than their monetary value.





The Moore farm as it looked c.1935. The house has since been moved up the hill and enlarged, but the barn is still there.

- *“to do all necessary nursing that the said Solomon and Susanna, wife of the said Solomon, may stand in need of”*
- *“to bring up all necessary fire wood suitable cut for the fire for the use of the said Solomon & Susanna”*
- *“to tend and take proper care of the said Solomon’s cattle and sheep at all times when it is not convenient for him to tend himself”*

By the terms of the bond, these obligations ended at Solomon’s death in December of 1827. There was no provision for Susanna, in case she outlived him. As it turned out, Artemas survived his father by just over a month, dying of a fever in January 1828. His elder brother, Jonas Brooks Piper, had died four days earlier, also of fever.

Losing her husband and two sons within a month must have made a sad time for Susanna. However, Solomon had made generous provision for her in his Will, and her four other sons must have seen that she was taken care of as she survived for another seventeen years.

James Moore’s bond (1844)

Samuel Moore (1787-1859) lived with his wife, née Abigail Knowlton, his son, James, and his daughter, Letitia – a rather small family for those days, especially when compared to the Pipers. The Moore house was on what is now the Stonewall Farm driveway off Page Road, but was then one of the principal roads to Jaffrey. As the photograph shows, the house, like the Pipers’, was small: a footprint of 1,800 sq. ft., not counting the woodshed.

In 1844 Samuel was 57 and James 26. In this case the whole farm was deeded to the son for a recited consideration of \$1,000. James’ bond was much the same as Artemas Piper’s, except that the penalty sum was \$1,000 (instead of \$800) to match the deed. The bond recites that it is made “in consideration of the conveyance of certain lands made this day to [James] by the said

Samuel Moore”.

In his bond James agreed to the following provisions (though not in this order):

- *“to support and maintain the said Samuel Moore and his present wife Abigail Moore in sickness and health during their lives or the life of the survivor of them “*

This time the widow’s care was not left to chance. The term, “present wife” seems odd, since Samuel never had any wife but Abigail. Perhaps the lawyer who drew the bond thought that Abigail might die and Samuel remarry, and that James wouldn’t want to be obliged to care for a stepmother.

- *“To pay all the just debts of the said Samuel Moore now contracted”*
- *“To pay all taxes that may hereafter be assessed on his [i.e. Samuel’s] poll and to pay them [Samuel and Abigail] or the survivor of them five dollars in money on the first day of April every year during their natural lives if desired”*

The Piper bond provided for turning over half the produce of the farm, but there was no provision for pocket money. Five dollars doesn’t seem like much, even at 1844 prices. Was the five dollars for both of them or for each? Careless drafting.

- *“To furnish them with comfortable house room and fire wood prepared for their fire places and deposited in the house if requested”*

The Piper bond merely called for the wood to be “cut for the fire”. This one is more specific, specifying a place of delivery.

- *“to provide for them suitable meals and drinks, cook their victuals and carry it to them if desired”* ➤

– “To furnish them with good wearing apparel suitable for their age and station in life, beds and bedding and all other things necessary for them”

Again, this bond is more specific than the other, which said nothing about the provision of food and clothing.

– “To find [provide] a horse and carriage suitable for the season for either or both of them to ride when requested”

– “To cause them at all times to be treated with due respect”

– “To entertain their friends when they may wish to visit them”

These last two provisions are a bit surprising; one would have thought such things could be taken for granted. Perhaps these matters were of real concern to Samuel and Abigail, but more probably they were put in by a paid-by-the-word lawyer.

– “To procure doctoring and nursing for them when necessary”

– “and should they or the survivor of them be deprived of reason before their death then the above provision shall be made for them to the satisfaction of the selectmen of the town in which they may reside”

The nursing provision appears in the Piper bond, but doctoring is new. It wasn't because there was no doctor in Dublin in 1824; there was. Perhaps the sense of “nursing” included medical attendance.

The contemplation of mental deterioration showed real courage

and foresight. What is surprising is the introduction of the Selectmen as third party overseers, which implies an even higher level of distrust than the idea of having a bond in the first place. That this was only lawyer's boiler plate, however, is suggested by the reference to “the town in which they may reside”. If the document had been tailor-made, it would have said “the selectmen of Dublin”, or just “the selectmen”.

Sad to say, the Moore arrangements did not work out quite as expected. James Moore died (of tuberculosis) in 1855 at the early age of 27, leaving both his parents, a wife and two very young children. Samuel lived another four years, dying at 73 in 1855, and Abigail died a year after that, leaving the farm in the ownership of a nine-year-old boy, Frank Clifton Moore.

Arrangements such as these are hardly models for coping with old age today. For one thing, children seldom live in the same town as their parents – often not even in the same state. Beyond that, our mind set is different. To us a written contract between parent and child seems a little cold-blooded. At the same time we are less tolerant of the discomfort in having three generations living in the same house, even though our houses are usually a bit bigger. But for earlier generations, with fewer options, spelling out the rewards and duties in legal form probably averted many recriminations and misunderstandings.

– J.W.H.

Note: The Piper bond is among the Piper Family Papers given by Jane Stewart Young in 1993. The Moore bond is from the Stonewall Farm Papers, given by the author in 1986

Solomon Piper

(1754-1827)

Solomon Piper was born in Concord, Massachusetts. He grew up in Acton, whither his family moved when he was still a child. He was one of the Acton Minutemen who fought at the rude bridge in Concord on the 19th of April, 1775. Later he served in Rhode Island and was at the battle of Saratoga, where Burgoyne's surrender was perhaps the turning point of the Revolution.

He appears to have been something of a real estate speculator. Among the family papers are deeds to land in Westminster, Mass. (1779 & 1781) and Peterborough (1783), but there is no evidence that he ever lived in either place. In 1788, the year of his marriage to Susanna Pratt of Acton, he bought land in Temple, where he lived for five years, and where his first three children – Solomon, Rufus and Cyrus – were born.

In 1793 he bought from Silas Brown “part of two lots of land situated in Dublin aforesaid viz part of number two in the first range & part of number three in the first range” down in the south-



The house built by Solomon Piper c. 1794 in a photograph taken in 1976. It has not changed much in two centuries.

east corner of Town. There he built what became the late William Pickford's house on Valley Road, where nine more children were born.

His eldest son, Solomon Jr., walked to Boston as a young man and became very rich as a merchant and banker. Among his benefactions to Dublin was the first organ in the Community Church. He was the subject of an article in the newsletter for February, 1993.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As is obvious from the lack of action at the schoolhouse museum, we decided to postpone the moving of the building until warmer weather returns. Winter construction work is more costly and potentially more dangerous. We are anxious to start but will try to be patient, knowing that historic events do not always unfold quickly.

I hope everyone has purchased several copies of the Dublin Historical Society Calendar. We are indebted to Nancy Campbell for her work on research and Nancy Cayford for her efforts in production. We also appreciate the feedback we received and look forward to making next year's edition even better. Calendars will be available at the February potluck meeting, if you still need a copy.

— Paul Tuller

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Recent Gifts to the Archives

The **Dublin Public Library** has given us two more lots of very interesting miscellaneous items, including family papers of the Chapman and Mauran families (1859-1969). Joseph G. Chapman was a prominent St. Louis businessman. His wife, Emma Bridge Chapman was the sister of Isabella Bridge Leighton, whose husband in 1888 built the house on Lake Road now owned by Loring and Susan Catlin. In 1897 Emma built "Homewood", designed by her son-in-law, John Lawrence Mauran. It is now the home of George and Leigh McLean.

Gordon Hayes has continued his benefactions by allowing us to copy photographs of his grandparents, Horace and Almira Wood, and giving us the bills for the construction of their house, now his house, at the corner of Main Street and the Lower Jaffrey Road.

Elizabeth Pool has kindly allowed us to make digital copies of 28 snapshots from a family album of the 1920's. We remind our members that we have the technology to copy photographs from albums without removing them and without damage to the album.

Dan Burnham, Henry Campbell, Francis de Marneffe, Mary Stewart Doyle and **Barbara Richards** have also been recent and generous donors.

Sale of items unrelated to Dublin

Although we are mainly in the business of acquiring things, we have made a start at a little much-needed disposal. On January 2, Charles Cobb, Auctioneers, sold for us two lots of pictures: a primitive painting of the Last Supper and a group of Currier & Ives prints.

Most museums and historical societies gather a lot of stuff that falls outside their field of interest, and this is particularly true of the Dublin Historical Society. In what might be described as its first incarnation - 1920-1944 - the Society was given a lot of things with no provenance and no known connection to Dublin. In many cases the donor's name was either not recorded or subsequently lost. The items sold were in that category. None was made in Dublin or belonged to identifiable Dublin people.

"De-accessioning" has become a bogey word in the museum world. It really shouldn't be, but in this case it doesn't apply. None of the pictures sold met our collecting criteria, so they were never accessioned in the first place.

Since these were two dimensional items, they fell within the jurisdiction of the archives. Consequently, the proceeds - \$580 - will go to the special fund for acquisitions and conservation of archival materials. There are more "orphaned" items at the schoolhouse museum. As and when they are sold, the proceeds will go to a similar fund for museum acquisitions.

C R E D I T S

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

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