



Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 61 – July 2004

THE WAY WE LIVED THEN *Outfitting A Bride Before Martha Stewart*

Among the materials recently turned over to us by the Dublin Public Library are two documents, roughly a century apart in date, illustrating how different families in different times provided for a daughter on her marriage.

ders whether they were all similarly endowed.

The recipient of the things on the list was Thaddeus's daughter, Julia Mason (1772-1839). She was just short of twenty-two when she married Cyrus Chamberlain on October 25, 1794, about two

months before the list was drawn up. Chamberlain kept a tavern in what is now the Parsonage and was for many years Town Clerk and Postmaster. He and Julia moved to New York State in 1835.

Apart from the entertaining spelling – “Citching table”, “dishkittel”, “Arthing ware” – it is instructive to see what a well-to-do bride was expected to bring with her in the way of household goods. These included two bedsteads with bedclothes, two sorts of spinning wheel, a churn, table ware, cooking utensils, various articles of furniture and a cow.

The mystery is why Thaddeus thought it worth the trouble of listing all these items with their values. Were all these things, including

the cow, bought for the occasion, so that the values were actual amounts spent? Or were they things from the Mason household? If the latter, what was the basis for the valuations? Was the total to be deducted from Julia's share of his estate? Since there is no record of Thaddeus leaving a Will, we shall probably never know.

A Bride of the 1890s

The popular conception of the Federal period in America as one of social and economic equality is largely a myth. The Thaddeus Masons were a more than ordinarily well-to-do family for their time, but a century later the concept of ‘well-to-do’ had expanded considerably.

A bill from Tiffany & Co. of New York to John Gilbert Chapman of St. Louis, Mo. furnishes something of a contrast to Thaddeus Mason's list. The bill is dated November 1, 1896, and covers

Item	Value
to one pair of Draw	2-7-6
to one four feet table	1-2-0
to table	0-14-0
to two chairs	1-18-0
to Citching table	0-6-6
to one Churn	0-6-0
to two wheels	0-3-0
to one wight tub	0-4-0
to one Chest tub	0-6-0
	0-2-8

The beginning of Lt. Thaddeus Mason's list.

“Things that my dauter July had...”

The earlier of the two comes from a collection of Mason family papers and is dated December 17, 1794. It is entitled “*To Things That my Dauter July had to Keep house with*” and lists 47 items, each valued in pounds, shillings and pence and coming to a total of £41 9s. 7d. This translates roughly into \$1,717.67 in today's money.

The preparer of the list was Thaddeus Mason (1746-1821), who came to Dublin from Sherborn, Mass., with his father, Benjamin, around 1765. He lived on the Old Harrisville Road, just over what is now the Harrisville town line. He was a Lieutenant in the militia, five times selectman and four times representative to the General Court. In 1794 he was 48 years old, and had sired eleven children, eight of whom were still living. He had already married off one daughter, Betsey, and would later marry off three more. One won-

The Dublin Historical Society **Annual Meeting** will take place on **Wednesday, August 18**, at the Dublin Town Hall, beginning at 6:30 with a potluck supper. The business meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M., followed by tours of the building, with the original 1881 architectural drawings on display and a video presentation documenting the schoolhouse move.

purchases during the month of October. These came to a total of \$1,178.98, which would be something like \$25,000 today. Mr. Chapman and his wife, Emma, were people of means.

The occasion of this spending spree was the marriage of their only daughter, Isabel, to John Lawrence Mauran. Mr Mauran was a distinguished architect in St. Louis. He designed "Homewood" (now George and Leigh McLean's house) for his mother-in-law, Emma Bridge Chapman. (Emma's sister, Isabella, and her husband, George E. Leighton, were the first St. Louis people to build a summer house in Dublin – now the Loring and Susan Catlins house.)

The Maurans were for many years prominent members of the Dublin summer colony. John Lawrence designed the Library, the Consolidated School, and the new façade for the Town Hall. In 1916 he also designed the Oval, which Isabel Chapman Mauran gave to the Town as a memorial to her parents. Among the Maurans' descendants in and around Dublin were Elizabeth King Bernier, Helen Warren and Isabel Warren Pratt.



Isabel Chapman Mauran some years after her wedding.
(Gift of Elizabeth King Bernier)

A Trousseau from Tiffany's

Besides the Tiffany silver, we don't know what else Isabel brought to her marriage – presumably the usual trousseau of linens and personal clothing – but Tiffany's bill shows what was thought necessary in 1896 by way of table settings for a well-bred young bride. Expectations had certainly changed in the century since Julia Mason's wedding. Whereas Julia got "one case of knives & forks" (4 shillings) and "half a doz of spones" (1 shilling and sixpence), Isabel got at least eighteen of everything.

And 'everything' meant teaspoons (24 of these), dessert spoons, table spoons, dinner forks, dessert forks (36), oyster forks, dinner knives, breakfast knives, and dessert knives. In addition, she got meat carvers, game carvers and a steel to sharpen them with; a knife and fork for serving fish; tongs, spoons and a sifter for sugar; serving spoons for vegetables (4), gravy (3), berries (2) and salt (2); ladles for soup (2), gravy (2) and oysters; forks for serving meat (4), pickles (2) and butter; a butter knife, a

City of NEW YORK Nov 1 1896				
Sold to Mrs. J. Chapman 46 Vandeventer Place St Louis Mo.				
Folio 579 No. To insure attention correspondence should be addressed to the firm.				
TERMS CASH All claims for corrections must be made within ten days.				
Oct	5	Brass Inkstand		40 00
		Umbrella		10 50
	6	3 Shade holders 4 ⁰⁰ 2 do 4 ⁰⁰		8 00
	7	6 Tea Spoons 9 ⁹⁶ 6 do 9 ⁹⁶ 6 do 9 ⁹⁶ 6 do 9 ⁹⁶		39 72
		6 Dessert Spoons 14 ⁹⁶ 6 do 14 ⁹⁶ 6 do 14 ⁹⁶		44 88
		6 Table 23 ⁹² 6 do 23 ⁹² 6 do 23 ⁹²		71 76
		6 Dinner forks 18 ⁰⁴ 6 do 18 ⁰⁴ 6 do 18 ⁰⁴		54 12
		6 Dessert forks 13 ⁷⁵ 6 do 13 ⁷⁵ 6 do 13 ⁷⁵		41 25
		6 " 13 ⁷⁵ 6 do 13 ⁷⁵ 6 do 13 ⁷⁵		41 25

Part of the Tiffany's bill for Isabel Chapman's silver.



"Homewood". Built in 1900 for Emma Bridge Chapman and later the home of her daughter, Isabel Chapman Mauran.

(Photograph by Henry D. Allison. Gift of William L. Bauhan.)

pie knife and a crumb knife.—235 pieces all told, and each engraved with the family crest.

The tableware alone came to \$887.48, which translates into \$18,903 in current dollars. But this doesn't tell the whole story. A dozen sterling silver tablespoons cost \$47.84 at Tiffany's in 1896 – a little over a thousand of today's dollars.

A glance at the current Tiffany catalogue, however, shows that a dozen tablespoons of the least expensive pattern now costs \$2,100, so that sterling silver, or at least Tiffany silver, seems to have gone up at over twice the rate of inflation. At that rate, Isabel Mauran's silver – just the flat silver – would come to around \$40,000, if

purchased today. Well, someone must be buying silver at that price, or Tiffany's wouldn't be issuing catalogues.

Another century has gone by. What do we think nowadays that a bride needs to set up housekeeping? Probably not a "cherne" or a "Chese tub", and almost certainly not a cow. Some eating utensils would come in handy, but it is doubtful if even the most pampered bride of our day expects eighteen place settings. With no servants to keep the silver polished, most brides probably prefer stainless steel.

And what will we be giving brides a hundred years hence? Will there still be such things as brides?

– John W. Harris

Currency Conversion

Not least of the challenges in writing this article was comparing the value of money at other periods to that of our own day. How do you translate £1, 17 s. 6d. in 1794 into 2004 dollars? How do you find the present value of an 1896 dollar?

The last problem turns out to be quite simple. There is a website called *eh.net* on which you can enter any number of dollars for any year and read out the value for any other year, all based on Bureau of Labor Statistics calculations and other arcana.

The pounds and shillings are a bit more difficult. A pound in New Hampshire was not necessarily worth the same as a pound

in England, or even one in Pennsylvania. Fortunately there are two works by John J. McCusker which give the dollar value of various colonial currencies in a way that can then be brought up to date through *eh.net*. [The citations are: McCusker, John J., *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1978 and *How Much is That in Real Money? / A Historical Price Index For Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the Economy of the United States*, The American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass., 1992.]

As a side issue, one might wonder why people were still figuring in pounds, shillings and pence halfway through George

Washington's second term. The changeover to dollars seems to have taken a while. In 1794, the Town of Dublin was still assessing property in pounds, shillings, pence and farthings. In 1795 the valuations were still in £.s.d., but the taxes were listed in dollars, dimes and cents. £.s.d. did not wholly disappear until 1798.

Acknowledgements. For help in the research for this article, thanks are due to Christian Pascasio at the Federal Reserve Bank's Money Museum in Richmond, Virginia; to Kate Collins at the Tiffany & Co. archives; and to the reference department at the Boston Athenæum.

– J.W.H.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

KeeP Watching for that Big Move! Everyone saw the sign on Main Street announcing the schoolhouse move and then noticed that no action followed. I hope that by the time you read this something will have started to happen at the schoolhouse.

We had signed on with a building mover last August when we determined we had raised enough money to pay for the move and a new foundation. He had numerous letters of recommendation from historical societies and individuals across the state. Once winter set in, we asked to postpone the start until early spring. We were informed we would be first in line and work would begin as soon as our roads were opened. We signed an agreement and the date to start was set for May 3. But as soon as May 3rd arrived, all communication stopped. I left numerous phone messages, but absolutely nothing was sent back in reply.

After waiting a month with no word, we had to begin the search

for a mover all over again. We researched a new list of prospects, made another round of site visits, received quotations, and signed up with Admiral Building Movers from Manchester. We then had to line up two excavation contractors, order steel beams to support the floor, and make other preparations for starting this project.

If all continues on track, the excavation will begin July 5 and the moving of the building will be July 8-10. Curious spectators should be able to park behind the Consolidated school and overlook the work from the front lawn of DCS. The front lawn of the schoolhouse will be closed off during this project.

Once the building is moved to its new position, a foundation will be poured under it, the granite sills will be reset, and the building will be lowered to its new home, only 25 feet from where it began in 1841! As a result of the move the schoolhouse will rest on a secure foundation for many years to come. I plan to document the move on videotape to be shown at our summer meeting.

— Paul Tuller

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Recent Accessions

Through the good offices of **Tony Anthony** and **Susan Barker** we have received the records of the Northern New England Daffodil Show. The show was started by Vallie Wells in 1974 and ran until 2003, more or less as an adjunct to the Garden Club of Dublin.

Tom Hyman has turned over the transcripts of interviews that he conducted in preparation for his book, *Village on a Hill*, together with some related research materials, for all of which we are most grateful.

The transcripts, like all transcripts of taped interviews, are pretty rough, partly because of poor acoustics and partly because the transcribers weren't familiar with Dublin proper names. Any reader who was interviewed by Tom Hyman and is willing to edit the transcript would be a benefactor to posterity.

Thanks to the eagle eye of ebay watcher **Nancy Campbell**, we have acquired a copy of the Rev. Levi Leonard's *Literary and Scientific Class Book*, published in Keene by John Prentiss in 1827. This is not a rarity, but it was one of Leonard's schoolbooks that we didn't have, and we were fortunate in finding a copy in unusually clean condition for a grade-school textbook. By the same means we have acquired an autograph letter from Leonard to his son. We are able to make purchases of this kind through the generosity of donors to the **Archives Fund**.

Some of our readers will have seen the segment of WMUR's Chronicle which was filmed partly at the Archives and aired on March 12.

Among those interviewed were Police Chief Jim Letourneau, Corporal Dana Hennessy, and honorary Irishmen John McKenna and Mike Walker. **Paul Tuller** made tapes of the broadcast for all the participants, with an extra couple of copies for the Archives.

We are grateful also to Anne Anable, Hank and Nancy Campbell, Michael Crowley, John Nelson, the Peterborough Historical Society and James Trowbridge for other gifts of archival materials.

Margaret Brewster Show in New Haven

An exhibition, *Substance & Style: Margaret Fitch Brewster and the Emergence of the Modern Society Woman*, will run through January 15, 2005, at the New Haven Colony Historical Society, 114 Whitney Avenue in New Haven, CT. The exhibit centers around a collection of Mrs Brewster's gowns.

Amy Trout, Curator at the New Haven Colony Historical Society, visited our archives to gather information on Mrs Brewster's life in Dublin, including her creation of the "Morelands" gardens and her role in founding the Garden Club. She took copies of a number of our photographs, and we are lending a few original documents, including the catalogue for the "Morelands" auction in 1964.

C R E D I T S

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

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