

Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 69 – February 2007

HENRY DWIGHT LEARNED

First President of the Dublin Historical Society

Our Society, we proudly and truthfully claim, was founded in 1920, a year when very few of us were alive, and even fewer conscious of the need for historic preservation. It therefore seems fitting to recount how our Society came to be, and to tell something about our first President.

Henry Dwight Learned (1849-1923), known all his life as "Dwight", was the thirteenth (and last) child of Hervey and Elvira Derby Learned. His great-grandfather, Deacon Benjamin Learned, was one of the group of settlers who had come to Dublin from Sherborn, Mass., in 1767. Deacon Benjamin built the house off the Upper Jaffrey Road that now belongs to David and Vera Elder. Four generations of Learneds farmed land surrounding that house and the one now owned by Dick Hammond. The family land stretched westward well up the flank of Monadnock.

Two of Dwight's elder brothers, Lewis and Marion, served in the Civil War, Lewis dying at the battle of Cedar Creek in the Shenandoah campaign of 1864. In addition to his principal occupation as a farmer, Dwight served the Town all his adult life, including thirty years as Moderator.

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Henry D. Learned

Henry Dwight Learned
Reproduced from Leonard & Seward,
The History of Dublin, N.H., 1920



The **Winter Pot-luck Supper** will be held on
Friday, February 23, at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Vestry.
Snow date: March 2

President Russell Bastedo will give an illustrated talk on
The Washington Family in Virginia
How and Why They Settled in Virginia and What They Found There.

Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert.

NOTES ON 19TH CENTURY WINTER TRAVEL IN DUBLIN

(from Leonard and Seward, *The History of Dublin, N.H.* (1920), pp. 558, 582)



Snow Roller, 1899

Dublin Historical Society; gift of John R. Gleason, Jr.

In a winter which, at the time of writing, is remarkable for the lack of any snow at all, it is amusing to look back at the ways of coping with snow in former days.

"For many years after the first settlement of Dublin, there were but few sleighs. The travelling [sic] was all on foot or on horseback. The practice, from the south part of the town to the great road [today's Old County Road], was, when the snow became deep, to begin at Twitchell's Mills [on what is now Page Road, near the Jaffrey line] and proceed to Moses Greenwood's [the present site of Phoenix House] in the following manner: the oxen and young cattle were turned unyoked into the road, and one person went before them to commence a track, and he was followed by the cattle. When the man on the lead became tired, another took his place. At each settlement, the fresh cattle were put forward; and, by being thus driven in Indian file, a good horse-path was made."

"Settlement" in this sense meant an individual farmhouse. The route described would have

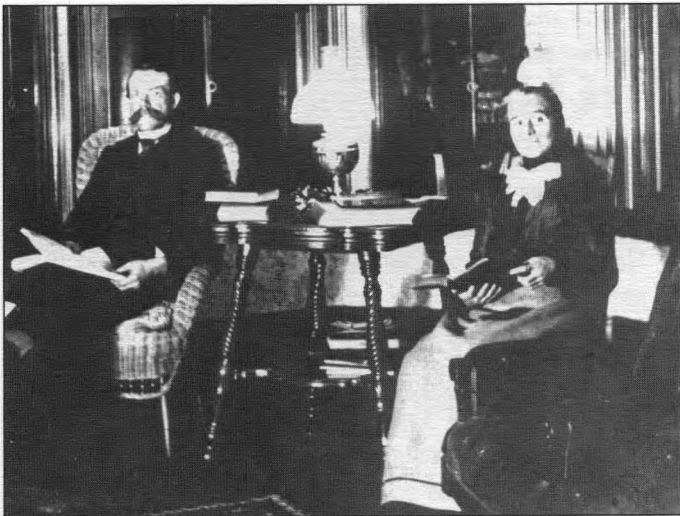
followed Page Road to the foot of Windmill Hill, then up the hill to what is now Pierce Road and thence to Old County Road.

"In former times, before the railroads were constructed, there were three four-horse teams which plied regularly between Keene and Nashua, passing through Dublin. They carried merchandise for the stores along the route, as well as goods for manufacturers and business men. Sometimes, in the winter, when the snow was deep, they would be stalled for two or three days at a time, and the bar-rooms of the hotels along the route were made merry by them."

The main road between Peterborough and Keene originally went along the south side of Dublin Lake, past what is now the golf course and westward along the Old Marlborough Road. Teamsters plying between Keene and Nashua would thus have a choice between Eli Morse's tavern, now part of Louisa Spencer's house, and the tavern kept by Cyrus Chamberlain in the building which is now the Church parsonage.

"The breaking of the roads to accommodate the winter travel was a difficult and severe undertaking in former years. In recent years [up to 1916] we have not had as much snow as formerly, and the rollers keep the roads in very good condition. [When sleighs became common, snow was not plowed but rolled to a smooth surface by ox-drawn rollers six feet high.] In the middle of the last century, however, and much later, it would take all of the men and boys in town, as well as all of the oxen and steers, attached to sleds, with ploughs at their sides, to keep the roads passable. The old teamsters were generally a jolly and good-natured crowd, but sometimes they became profane if the travelling [sic] were not good."

—P.R.B.



Dwight Learned and his wife, Eva (Frost) Learned (1856-1932) at their house on the eastern slope of the mountain, c. 1895.
Dublin Historical Society; gift of Carol Gebhardt

HENRY DWIGHT LEARNED, *continued from page 1*

A MODEL MODERATOR

Hildreth Allison, in his unpublished memoir, "So Well Remembered", records:

"As Moderator at Town Meetings he conducted affairs in a smooth and subtile [sic] manner and carried things off without a hitch. I learned a good deal about 'moderating' by watching and following Dwight's technique, which stood me in good stead when I myself served as Moderator in the 1930's and '40's."

The famous Blizzard of 1888 fell on Town Meeting day, the second Tuesday in March. As Moderator, Dwight Learned slogged his way on snowshoes to the Town Hall, where he rounded up enough voters to form a quorum and vote an adjournment. (Some of us remember Town Meeting day of 1986, when a severe ice storm trapped many people in their houses. Moderator Rob Trowbridge managed to reach the school gym – though not on snowshoes – where he found a sufficient number of hardy souls to adjourn the meeting to the following Wednesday.)

In the late 1890s, Dwight sold his house and all his land east of the Upper Jaffrey Road to Franklin MacVeagh, a successful wholesale grocer from Chicago, who later became President Taft's Secretary of the Treasury. (MacVeagh built the house known as "Knollwood", now owned by Joseph and Augusta Petrone.) Dwight moved over to his land across the Upper Jaffrey Road and built himself a house far up the eastern slope of Monadnock. (The house still stands, but has been enveloped in Carol Gebhardt's house, "Far Horizons".)

THE ORIGINS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

With the completion in 1916 of the first section of the brick Consolidated School, the former District No. 1 one-room schoolhouse next door became surplus to requirements. At the 1920 Town meeting it was:

"Resolved: that the town of Dublin accept the gift of the old No. 1 School House for Historical purposes, as tendered by the Dublin School District at its last annual meeting, and that a committee of five consisting of Henry D. Learned, Miss Emily E. Derby, Milton D. Mason, John A. Gleason, and Arthur T. Appleton be authorized to formulate by-laws, and complete the formation of the Historical Society and selection of its officers, and that the sum of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) is hereby raised and appropriated and made available for the Society's use."

(This wholesome precedent for granting tax money for the Society's support is — unfortunately — no longer followed.)

The five committee members signed the articles of agreement for the new Society, which were filed with the Secretary of State on May 22, 1920. These are the articles (with a single amendment to comply with I.R.S. requirements) under which we operate today.

After several attempts, an organization meeting was held at Miss Derby's house (later Aimée Lamb's house, and now Joyce Nelson's) with Dwight Learned in the chair. That meeting elected officers, including Dwight Learned as President, and adopted by-laws, which provided for membership by election and pegged dues at fifty cents a year.

(The Historical Society did not acquire title to the Schoolhouse until 1928. In the same year the Society voted to allow the Selectmen to move the Civil War monument onto the Schoolhouse lawn.)

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IN MEMORIAM

Lois Appleton Faulkner died in North Conway on January 19 at the age of 96.

She was the daughter of Arthur T. and Alice Fox Appleton, and grew up at the Appleton Farm (now Del Rossi's).

Mrs. Faulkner was one of three life members of the Society who presided at the meeting at which the Society was revived in 1986.

The Society's condolences go to her three surviving sons.



Dwight Learned in his buggy, c. 1910.
Dublin Historical Society; gift of Carol Gebhardt

of John and Amanda (Simonds) Frost of East Jaffrey. They had one son, Everett Dwight, born May 22, 1887.

"He was elected to 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 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 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."

That long record of public service omits Dwight Learned's membership on the Town History Committee, on which he served from 1904 until the publication of the history in 1920.

To lighten the weight of so much worthiness, it is recorded that Dwight was a talented amateur actor.

A hand-drawn memorial, now hanging at the Archives, pays tribute to Dwight Learned in these words:

"He was a man of sterling integrity, a helper in all community activities, a counselor in the business and educational affairs of the town in which he spent a long and useful life, honored and trusted by his fellow men."

An enviable epitaph.

— J.W.H.

SUMMARY OF A WELL-SPENT LIFE

The minutes for the meeting of November 7, 1923, noted the President's illness, and voted to send him "a note of greeting". He died three days later on November 10, 1923. A "biographical sketch" prepared by Charles Appleton and Willard Pierce, is recorded in the minute book:

"Henry Dwight Learned, son of Hervey and Elvira (Derby) Learned, was born in Dublin, N. H. Dec. 28, 1849, died Nov. 10, 1923. Mr. Learned was educated in Dublin public schools, Peterboro and Jaffrey High Schools, and was a school teacher for a few terms; after which he settled on the home farm in Range 3 Lot 9, where he resided until he built a home on one of the foothills of Monadnock mountain, where he lived until his death. He married June 10, 1879 Eva A. Frost, daughter

RECENT ACCESSIONS

AT THE ARCHIVES

Dennis and Sharron Monaghan have given us a collection of materials relating to the annual Gas Engine Meets: photographs, posters and other memorabilia. Sharron is also making a photographic record of the destruction of the hospital buildings on Beech Hill.

A number of photographs of contemporary people and events have come from **Anne Anable**, who continues in her role of recording angel.

AT THE MUSEUM

Several signs from the former Beech Hill Hospital

were rescued by **Tom Vanderbilt**. From **Jane Keough** comes an antique ink bottle found on the Keough property. A Masonic medal worn by DeLos Bond has been presented by **Don Casey**.

Nancy Shook Bender has added to her generous past benefactions with six more pieces of Dublin commemorative china.

C R E D I T S

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

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