

# Dublin Historical Society

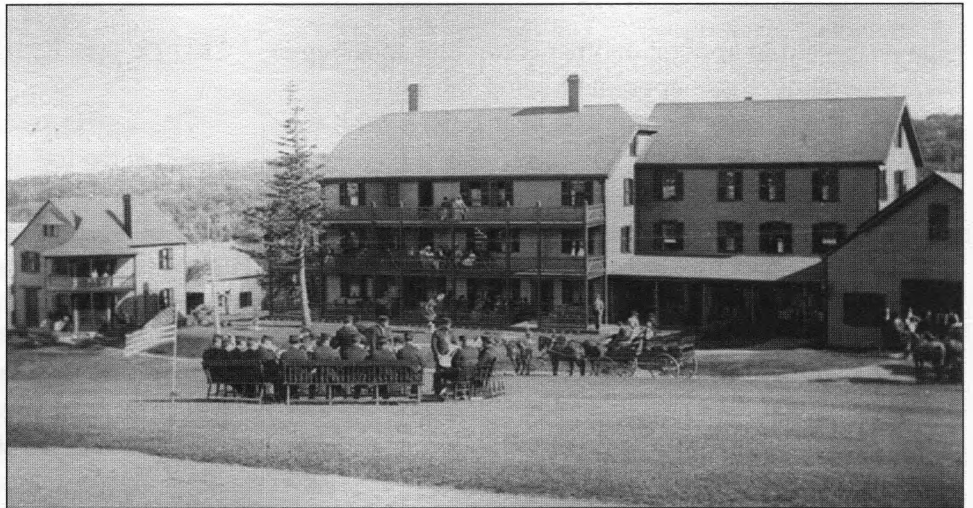
Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 73 – June 2008

## THE DUBLIN FIRE COMPANY TURNS 100

**T**his year is the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Dublin Fire Company, a private organization not to be confused with the Dublin Fire Department, which is a town-supported entity. The Company's founding in 1908 was the direct result of a single disaster – the burning of the Leffingwell Hotel on November 22, 1908.

Abstracts of the 1907 and 1908 Town Meetings show a recognition that the Town needed some sort of fire protection. The warrant for the 1907 Town Meeting included an article "to see if the Town will vote to purchase suitable fire apparatus for protection against fires and raise and appropriate money for the same or pass any vote relating thereto." There appearing to be no great urgency, the meeting voted to defer the question by appointing a committee of two (Clesson Gowing and George W. Gleason) to look into the matter and report the following year. The committee made an oral report to the 1908 Town Meeting, which voted "That the Town raise and appropriate a sum not



*The Leffingwell Hotel and Annex, c. 1890  
Dublin Historical Society, photograph by Henry D. Allison*

exceeding \$500.00 to be used for the purpose of purchasing a Chemical Fire Engine. . . " The Moderator

### SUMMER EVENTS

The annual **summer party** will be held on **Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>** at the home of Louisa Thoron in Jaffrey. Invitations will be mailed to members on or about July 1<sup>st</sup>.

The **Annual Meeting** will be held on **Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 p.m.** at "Knollwood", the home of Ambassador and Mrs. Joseph Petrone. "Knollwood" was built 1899-1900 for Franklin MacVeagh, Secretary of the Treasury in the Taft

administration from 1912-1916.

Charles Doleac, founder of the Japan-America Society of New Hampshire and the Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum, will speak on *Teddy Roosevelt's Nobel Peace Prize*. The Prize was awarded for the role President Roosevelt played in the Russo-Japanese Peace Treaty negotiations of 1907, conducted at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The 1841 **Schoolhouse Museum** will be **open** weekends during July and August between 12 and 2 p.m.



*The ruins of the Leffingwell Hotel and Annex (note the "Casino" at the right), 1908.  
Dublin Historical Society, George W. Gleason photograph collection.*

was instructed to appoint another committee to acquire such an engine, those appointed being the same two – Gowing and Gleason – from the year before, with the addition of Fred A. Pierce.

The committee followed instructions. In May 1908, Clesson Gowing, as Chairman of the Fire Committee, was reimbursed \$450.00 for a "Chemical engine for town of Dublin."

In those days, a "chemical engine" most likely meant a tank of water to which soda and acid could be added, causing a chemical reaction so that the resulting mix came out of the tank under pressure.

No record survives of what Dublin's engine looked like, or whether it was horse-drawn or pulled by hand. It was apparently stored at George W. Gleason's house. How effective this chemical engine was in fighting the Leffingwell Hotel fire on Sunday night November 22<sup>nd</sup> can be judged by the result that not only the hotel, but several adjacent buildings burned to the ground.

## OUT OF THE RUINS

The Leffingwell was on the south side of Main Street, at the top of the hill, opposite the east end of Old Common Road. The hotel had closed for the season; only a caretaker was in residence and he was gone when the fire started in the attic. Fire quickly engulfed the hotel, the separate annex and the Unitarian Parsonage (now "Rubber Stamps of America").

As recounted in an article by Hildreth Allison entitled "The Night The Leffingwell Burned" in the August 1974 issue of *New Hampshire Profiles*:

*The roof toppled in, creating a shower of sparks and firebrands which, borne on the strong wind down the village hill, kindled here and there lesser blazes. Townsfolk who had remained at home got out their garden hoses and began soaking their roofs and wetting down clapboarding.*

## PAMELA PEABODY'S FILM ON ABBOTT THAYER

Pamela Peabody, a summer resident and Historical Society member, has produced a film – **Invisible: Abbott Thayer and the Art of Camouflage** – which will have its premier showing on Saturday, July 26, at the Colonial Theater in Keene.

The evening before, Friday July 25, at 8:00 p.m., her co-producer, Carl Colby, will give a talk on the film and its subject at the Amos Fortune Forum, which is held at the meetinghouse in Jaffrey Center. Mr. Colby will be introduced by our President, Rusty Bastedo.

To make it easier for members to attend the lecture, the Society's summer party (see p.1) will be held in Jaffrey.

The fire was stopped when it reached the Library with its stone walls and slate roof. All that remained of the hotel buildings was the "Casino", behind the present Hanson house. The cause of the fire remains unknown. The hotel was under foreclosure and was uninsured.

Dublin Fire Company records state that the following notice was posted on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the day of the fire: "The Citizens of Dublin are requested to meet at the Vestry next Saturday evening, November 28, at 7:30 o'clock to consider the matter of better fire protection." The fire company minute book further records that thirty or more people attended the meeting and voted to "proceed to organize a Fire Company to be called: 'The Dublin Volunteer Fire Company'."

The following 30 volunteers, a majority of whom lived in or near the village, were the original members of the Company:

Fred A. Adams	James Allison
Henry D. Allison	William W. Andrew
Charles M. Atwood	Walter D. Bailey
Almon A. Baldwin	Dr. Alfred H. Childs
Frank E. Clukay	Henry A. Coolidge
Herman H. Priest	Curtis E. Fairbanks
Leon A. Fairbanks	Charles P. Fisher
Henry E. Fiske	Warren L. Fiske
Wilfred M. Fiske	Archie R. Garfield
William F. Girard	John A. Gleason
Clesson E. Gowing	George A. Gowing
John H. Grimes	Edward G. Kemp
Thomas S. Lynch	Fremont E. Mason
John H. Mason	Milton D. Mason
James A. Porter	Edward. L. Twitchell

At this first meeting, those present chose Dr. Childs (the Town doctor) as Foreman of the Company, along with Edward G. Kemp and Charles P. Fisher as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants. The next meeting, on December 5<sup>th</sup>, adopted a Constitution, By-laws and Rules of Order, consisting of 28 articles and four Rules of Order (the rules detailed how one was to behave at meetings). The by-laws set out the qualifications for membership and the duties of members, and prescribed the duties of the officers and committees. The Fire Company's present by-laws have been reduced to fourteen articles, but contain basically the same provisions as the original ones.

#### **FIRST FIRE HOUSE, EQUIPMENT AND CHIEF**

The March 9, 1909 Town Meeting voted to adopt three resolutions presented by Dr. Childs:

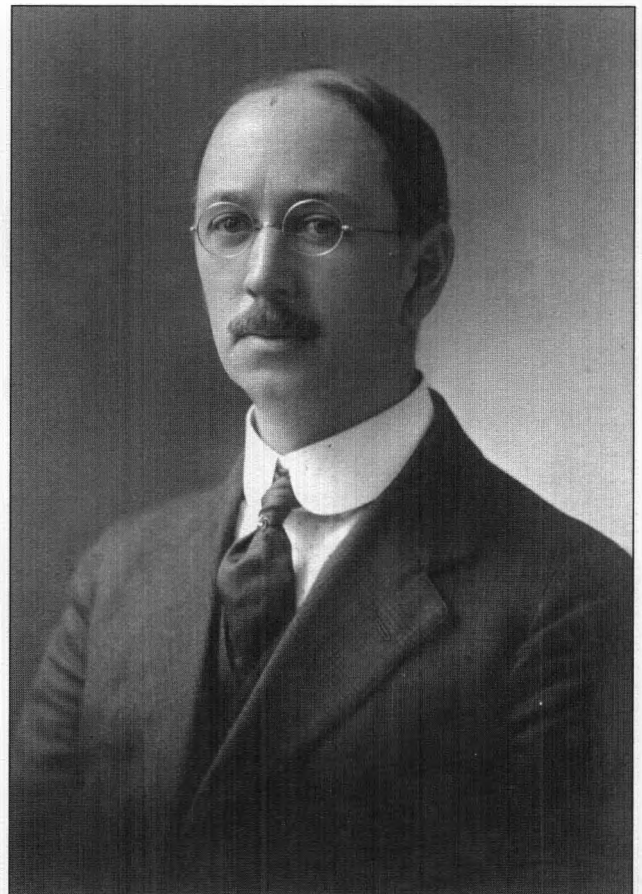
*Resolved that the town raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred and fifty (\$150) dollars to assist the Dublin Volunteer Fire Company to purchase ladders and other paraphernalia for the better protection of property ...*

*Resolved that the Selectmen be instructed after conference with the Foreman of the Dublin Volunteer Company, to provide and to suitably finish off a portion of the basement of the Town house, for the storage free of charge and rental of the said company's ladders ...*

*Resolved that the Town grant the use of the School room in the Town House free of charge to the Dublin Volunteer Fire Company for its meetings.*

It took a really serious fire – the worst the Town had ever seen – to overcome inertia and arouse the necessary public spirit.

The origins of the Fire Department are less clear. Even though the Town had appointed Dr. Childs Chief Fire Ward, a position he held until 1916, it wasn't until the mid 1920s that the Town started regularly appropriating money for the support of the Fire Company. No



*Dr. Alfred H. Childs, the first Fire Company Foreman and Town's first Fire Chief  
Dublin Historical Society*

money was paid to members of the Company for fighting fires. Since that time, the two organizations have continued side-by-side – one a tax-supported department of the Town with the firefighters paid by the Town and the other a private association, raising money to supplement to town's appropriation. Membership in the two is identical, except for that the Fire Chief is not a member of the Company. Each organization also has different officers.

### THE COMPANY EXPANDS

By 1911 the Company's equipment included one tank carriage with hose and ten extension ladders ranging from 16 to 46 feet. Other paraphernalia listed was: 200 feet of half inch rope, 100 feet of one inch rope, five force pumps, 46 galvanized pails, two strainer pails, one pail with a hook, three ladder hooks, an agate funnel and soda and acid for the fire extinguishers. Ten fire extinguishers were stationed at Dr. Childs' and both stores - Gleason's and Allison's.

The 1921 Town Meeting adopted the following resolution:

*... that the Town raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars, provided an*

*equal sum be contributed from outside sources for the purchase of suitable Fire Apparatus, and for the erection of a building with necessary requirements to house the same; the above sum to include the land on which the building shall stand; but no fire house shall be erected thereon, or Fire Apparatus purchased until a deed of the land is properly executed and given to the Town of Dublin.*

It is unclear if any piece of "fire apparatus" was actually bought, although the Company minute book records a motion to buy two tires and tubes for a "Packard Truck". Nothing appears to have happened in regard to acquiring property for a firehouse until 1963, when the present station was erected. In the meanwhile fire equipment continued to be stored in the basement of the Town Hall and Fire Company meetings were held at the Town Hall.

The 1930 Annual Report records the Town's thanks to "its summer residents for the many kindnesses and assistance given the Town, at the Monadnock Mt. fire, this past summer. It further wishes to thank the following persons for their splendid gift to the Town of a forest fire pump and 2000 feet of hose and other equipment: Mr. J.L. Mauran, Mr. C.C. Pell, Mr. Edric Weld,



*The Dublin Muster Team with the 1932 truck, 1965 – Front row, kneeling: John Elder and Robert Durkee; Middle row – l-r: Albert "Stoney" Stone (leaning on fender), Russell Eaves (in driver's seat), William McQuillen, Gordon Calder (sitting on running board), James McCarthy and Michael Worcester; Back row, seated on truck: unknown and Cleo Pinney.*

Dublin Historical Society



*The Dublin Fire Company in 2008 – L-R: EMS Deputy Chief “K” Horgan, 2nd Deputy Chief Joe Sangermano, 1st Lieutenant Matt Worcester, 2nd Lieutenant Steve Weber, Nancy Miller, Captain Justin “Bubba” Carpenter, Chief Tom Vanderbilt, Sam Bordner, Andy Hungerford, Ron Haynes, and 1st Deputy Chief Brian Barden.*

*Photograph by Nancy Campbell*

Mr. and Mrs. Gorham Brooks, Mr. R.H. Carleton, Mr. Francis E. Frothingham, Miss Amelia Peabody, Hon. Franklin MacVeagh, Mr. Daniel K. Catlin, Mr. Frederick S. Brewster, and Mr. Grenville Clark.”

In 1932, based on the recommendation of the Fire Company, the Town purchased a Maxim Ford 300 gallon pumping engine. The total cost was \$3,200.00 and included among other items, a 70 gallon water tank, 200 feet of 3/4” best quality booster hose, one electric siren horn, two electric headlights, one electric tail light, one speedometer, two 3-gal mounted fire extinguishers, one mounted pick head axe and one mounted crowbar. This engine was used as late as the 1960s as a parade and muster truck and is still in the fire-house.

By way of contrast, the 2008 Town Meeting authorized a new engine for \$325,000.00 which will include, among other items, a 1,000 gallon tank, 1500 feet of 3” hose, 100 feet of 2” hose, 800 feet of 1 3/4” hose, a cascade unit for filling self-contained breathing apparatus and foam for fighting fire.

#### **FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES**

Over the course of the Company’s 100 years, members have undertaken various social and fundraising activities. Some years there were skits in the Town Hall, a fireman’s banquet at the Church Vestry or the

V-Lawn Inn and a weenie roast for the Boy Scouts. There was an annual Firemen’s Ball and a Christmas party with Santa Claus. For about 50 years the Company sold tickets to the Firemen’s Ball as a means of fundraising.

Today the Company’s main source of funds is the Gas Engine Meet in September, where members of the Company put on a chicken barbeque. The Company also owns a tent which it rents for private functions.

This fundraising has supplemented the Town’s yearly appropriation by making possible the purchase of rescue equipment and other gear, such as a washer for firemen’s gear, a drying rack, lockers for the firemen, a thermal imaging camera, water rescue and ice rescue boats, a rescue jack system for stabilization of vehicles and unsafe structures, a pressure washer and much more. In addition, the Company receives donations of money or equipment, such as a six-wheel ATV for transportation of equipment, supplies and people to any site and automatic defibrillators in the fire engines, rescue truck, police cruiser and various locations around Town.

A combination of donations from private citizens, funds raised by Fire Company members, and monies from Federal grants have enabled these purchases, outfitting Dublin’s Fire Department with some of the finest rescue equipment in the region. Over the years,

these private initiatives by the Company have saved Dublin taxpayers something on the order of \$350,000.00.

### ONE HUNDRED YEARS LATER

Today, one hundred years after the Leffingwell Hotel fire, the Fire Company has eighteen members who are the following:

Brian Barden	Sam Bordner
Corey Boyd	Travis Boyd
Justin Carpenter	Tom Dardas
Bob Edick	Mike Edick
Chad Fontaine	Ron Haynes
"K" Horgan	Andy Hungerford
Nancy Miller	Dick Patton
Joe Sangermano	Roger Trempe
Steve Weber	Matt Worcester

The Company is lead by Captain Justin Carpenter, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Matt Worcester, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Steve Weber and Secretary/Treasurer EMS Deputy Chief "K"

Horgan. The Department is lead by Fire Chief Tom Vanderbilt, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chief Brian Barden, 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Chief Joe Sangermano and EMS Deputy Chief "K" Horgan.

The Town has an impressive fleet of fire and rescue apparatus, consisting of two pumper engines, a 3,200 gallon tanker, a rescue truck, a "new" brush truck for fighting brush fires (funded almost exclusively from a FEMA grant and private donation), two boats (one for ice rescues), hydraulic rescue tools (commonly called "the Jaws of Life"), a large diameter hose reel truck, a six-wheeler ATV, and of course the old 1932 truck (which still resides in the station, but is no longer in-service).

The Town is truly fortunate to have such a well equipped Fire Department and a Fire Company of dedicated volunteers.

- Nancy E. Campbell

[**Note:** I am indebted to Chief Tom Vanderbilt and EMS Deputy Chief "K" Horgan for their assistance in writing this article and to the Fire Company for providing their records. N.E.C.]

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### RECENT ACCESSIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

An anonymous donor has presented a painting by the late **Richard Meryman** of the fourth hole at the original golf course on Windmill Hill Road. Meryman came to Dublin in the summer of 1906 as an assistant to Abbott Thayer and is said to have lived in the caddy shack which appears behind the green in this painting.

We are fortunate in being able to purchase copies of documents in the State Archives relating to the guardianship of **Ezra Snow** (1785-1849), who was judged insane in 1842. The documents include John Eliot's accounts as guardian.

Through the generosity of **Jamie Trowbridge** and **Yankee Publishing, Inc.** we have acquired six town histories of neighboring towns, six books authored by

Dublin residents and several other New Hampshire related books. Trustee **Sharron Monaghan** has completed her photographic record of the demolition of the hospital buildings on Beech Hill.

**William Raymond** has added to our collection of Bicentennial photographs and given us photographs of his parent's 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary party in 1958. **William L. Bauhan, Publishers** donated a copy of Joseph Close's book, *Mail / Letters to Lurette*, edited by member Hal Close. **Alaric Faulkner**, son of life member Lois Appleton Faulkner, sent us digital photographs of his grandfather, Arthur Appleton, in his World War I uniform.

Our grateful thanks to them all, as well as to our other thoughtful donors.

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### C R E D I T S

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

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