

Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 41 – November, 1997

RESTORED TO LIFE

Cleaning and Repair of a Painting in the Dublin Consolidated School

by Paul Tuller

A large oil painting which has hung for many years in the Dublin Consolidated School is now temporarily at the Archives Building, after receiving some much needed restoration.

The painting depicts a young girl lying in the snow with a lantern at her side. A sheepdog is touching her shoulder with its paw. Another dog looks back, perhaps at a human rescue party invisible behind a hill. There is an ambiguity, probably deliberate, as to whether the little girl, aged perhaps ten, is alive or dead. Her eyes are shut and her cheeks are pink, but the extinguished lantern suggests that she has been out all night.

The painting is signed "B. Riviere" with the date, 1879, in the lower left corner. According to a label on the back, its title was "Lost in the Snow", when it belonged to the St. Louis art dealers, McCaughen & Burr. An accompanying plaque states that the painting was given to the school in 1949 by Isabel Chapman Mauran, in memory of her husband, John Lawrence Mauran.

John Lawrence Mauran, a long-time summer resident of Dublin, was a distinguished architect in St. Louis, and at one time President of the American Institute

of Architects. He was the architect of the original part of the Consolidated School in 1916. He also designed the Dublin Public Library (1901), the village oval (1918) and present facade of the Dublin Town Hall (1916), as well as a number of Dublin summer houses.

Originally this painting was displayed in the sixth

grade classroom, but in recent years it has been hanging in obscurity, high on the wall above the stairwell to the gymnasium / auditorium. Most visitors to the Archives building are unaware of ever having seen it before, although anyone who has been to Town Meeting has walked under it.

Last fall it was noticed that the painting was suffering from neglect and that some action would be needed to restore and preserve it. The painting was

inspected by Peter Pelletier of Pelletier Fine Art in Peterborough, who provided some basic information on the artist, Briton Riviere.

Riviere was born in London in 1840 into a family of artists. He studied with his father, William Riviere, and others and began to exhibit his own work at the age of twelve. From 1858 until his death in 1920 his work was almost always represented at the annual show at the Royal Academy, to which he was elected



in 1860. He received a medal at the Paris Exposition in 1878 and a bronze medal at the 1889 Universal Exposition.

According to his entry in the Dictionary of National Biography, Riviere was seen as successor to Landseer as a painter of animals. His paintings are in the collections of many British museums, including the Tate Gallery and the Victoria & Albert Museum.

With this proof of the painting's worth, the Conval School District was approached to authorize its restoration. They agreed to having the work done and commissioned Nicholas Isaak of Westmoreland. When cleaning and restoration were completed, the Conval Board did not want to return the painting to its former place at Dublin Consolidated School, because major renovations of the building are due to begin in June of 1998. With the permission of the Town of Dublin and the Dublin Historical Society, the painting will be stored at the Dublin Archives until the school renovation is complete and a special place is designated for this painting. It is currently on view for anyone who visits the Archives Building.

There is more to this story however. Curiosity led John Harris to contact a friend in London [Susan Gwynne-Timothy, whom many members will remem-

ber, ed.] for more information on the artist. She was able to shed more light on Riviere's life, but introduced a mystery – no painting called "Lost in the Snow" appeared in the complete list of Riviere's paintings. Could this painting be a forgery?

Careful reading of an article in the *The Art Annual* for 1891 seems to answer that question. The article describes a painting by Riviere called "Strayed from the Flock", which depicted a lamb lying dead in the snow. This painting had been hard to sell because of its somber subject. Later in the article, there is mention of another Riviere picture called "A Winter's Tale", which is described as "a sort of humanized version of the early 'Strayed from the Flock'", and is said to be in America. From other sources, we know that "A Winter's Tale" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1879, the year of the signature on "Lost in the Snow".

We therefore tentatively conclude that "Lost in the Snow" and "A Winter's Tale" are one and the same painting. It seems probable that an art dealer, possibly McCaughen & Burr of Saint Louis, whose label is on the back of the painting, changed the name to make it more saleable. By the time the school is ready to take this painting back it is hoped this theory can be corroborated.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

WHAT WE DO – AND WHY

The time of year when the Society invites current members to renew their memberships and non-members to become new members, seems a good occasion to remind ourselves why the Society does what it does.

The Society's mission was clearly set out in its Articles of Association, adopted in 1920:

"The objects for which this corporation is established are the collection, preparation and preservation of all historical facts, relics and memorials of all kinds pertaining to the Town of Dublin . . ."

In pursuit of these goals, we COLLECT, and actively solicit, artifacts and records – books, letters, photographs, business records and the like – that document or illustrate life in Dublin. We also collect history as it goes by, saving newspaper clippings, photographs and other memorabilia relating to living persons and current events.

We PREPARE accessions to the collections in various ways. Every item must be inspected for mold and insect infestation – both highly contagious. It must also be acknowledged, marked with an accession number, described, catalogued and indexed. In addition, metal objects must be oiled or polished, textiles cleaned, papers flattened and mended. Most of this work is done by volunteers, but we have one part-time paid staff member. There are also unavoidable expenses for acid-free boxes, folders and the like.

The most important item that we have to PRESERVE is the former District No. 1 schoolhouse, where our museum collection is housed. The Society acquired the schoolhouse from the Dublin School Board in 1928. Built in 1841 and used until 1916, it is one of the few remaining unreconstructed one-room schoolhouses in New Hampshire.

In the past ten years, the schoolhouse has had to be reroofed, repainted inside and out, and extensively rebuilt in the northwest corner, where the floor and sills were rotting. It also requires a never-end-

Society News

The 1997 Annual Meeting

by Nancy Handy

One of the most elegant of Dublin's summer houses, "Knollwood", now the home of Joseph and Augusta Petrone, was the setting for this year's Annual Meeting on Thursday evening, August 14th. As over 100 members and guests gathered in the "Knollwood" ballroom, they were treated to eloquent, impromptu renditions of Beethoven and Rachmaninoff by our multi-talented Vice-President, John Nelson.

In her words of welcome, Augusta Petrone told how her father, then a little boy, was taken to a reception given at "Knollwood" in 1910 by Secretary of the Treasury Franklin MacVeagh for the visiting President, William Howard Taft. The occasion so impressed young Ernest Henderson that the thought may have taken root that "Knollwood" was a place he would someday like to live. The President thanked the Petrone's for their hospitality.

Business

Following a proposal by the Trustees, and there being no other nominations, the Society elected the following as officers for the ensuing year:

President	John Harris
Vice-President	John Nelson
Treasurer	Tony Anthony

The President thanked retiring trustee Alice Ellis, saying, "We have certainly been grateful to Alice for all that she has done for us, along with her husband, Ray – two for the price of one – double value. Ray and Alice have been faithful attenders of our meetings. They have been, and I hope will continue to be, the people who show you around our

museum, and have also been very generous in their gifts of papers and objects of historic interest." At the suggestion of the Trustees, Alice and Ray were elected, by acclamation, honorary members of the Society.

The President said that to replace Alice it would be necessary to elect at least two people. Ann Walsh, who rotated off the board last year, has been summoned back as a Trustee. "We need Ann," he said, "for her many contributions, not least in providing sustenance at gatherings such as this one." He went on to thank Ann for the refreshments provided at "Knollwood", and also thanked those who assisted her: Alice Ellis, Nancy Handy, Joyce Nelson and Thea Sabine.

Paul Tuller was proposed for the other vacancy on the board of Trustees. In addition to running Pierce Road Designs, he is founder of the Friends of the Dublin Art Colony. Looking up material for that organization's activities, he has been a frequent visitor to the archives. Said President Harris: "Many of you doubtless went to Paul's exhibition of the work of Joseph Lindon Smith, which was held at the Dublin School last winter." At the time of our annual meeting, Paul was working on an exhibition of paintings by Beatrix Sagendorph. "Paul", said the President, "is an energetic and gifted young man."

There being no further nominations, Ann Walsh and Paul Tuller were elected Trustees for three-year terms.

Losses as Well as Gains

On a sadder note, the President reported the recent deaths of two of our life members: Florence Henderson, Augusta Petrone's aunt, and Lurette Eaton.

"These women", he said, "were important to the Historical Society in a special way. When Bill Bauhan and I got the Society going again, eleven or twelve years ago, the question was how to resuscitate a corporation that had been asleep for twenty-four years. How were we to get legal title to what it owned? At that time, by the way, we didn't know it owned the schoolhouse. The Selectmen thought the Town owned it. It was a question of establishing a

*We record with admiration – nay, with awe –
the retirement of our honorary member,
Dorothy Worcester, in her sixty-eighth year as
Librarian of the Dublin Public Library.*



The Gleason Family at the Archives.

L-R: John R. Gleason, Sr., George Gleason, Barbara and John R. Gleason, Jr.

ing campaign against the powder-post beetle. The adjoining woodshed / privy has been reroofed, but now needs new siding and extensive repairs to the foundation.

Conservation of papers and pictures also involves expense. The services of professional restorers and conservators do not come cheap, and we never have the resources to do all that needs to be done.

Who Uses our Collections? The schoolhouse museum was only open four Sunday afternoons this summer, but 35 visitors signed the guestbook. Use of the Society's archives has steadily increased over the last several years - as the accompanying chart shows. Some of these inquiries come from scholars doing research on Dublin artists, especially Abbott Thayer. The great majority, however, come from descendants of Dublin families now living in other parts of the country.

For example, we recently were pleased to welcome former Dublin resident John R. Gleason, with his sons, George and John, Jr., who looked at some Gleason genealogy, as well as some old pictures of Dublin. They also visited with old friends, found the Gleason graves in the cemetery and toured the schoolhouse museum.

John Gleason, who now lives in Washington state, will be ninety next month. His grandfather, George W. Gleason, and his father, John A. Gleason, used to keep a grocery store just east of the Town Hall, where Peter Hoekstra's building now stands. Besides a grocery, the Gleasons also ran a real estate and insurance business.

A number of out-of-town Dublin descendants have, to our great delight, become members of

the Society. The majority of our members, however, are incomers, or the children of incomers, there being only one family remaining in Dublin that can trace back to an early settler. So we probably can't find *your* ancestors, or ancestral photographs.

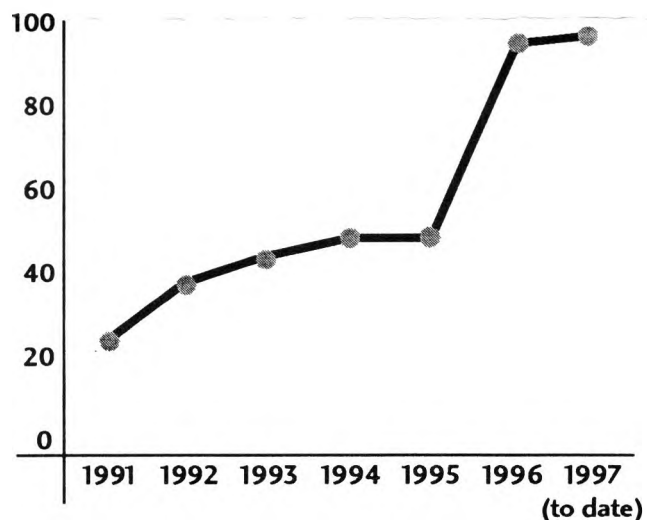
But what about your descendants? *Your* great-grandchildren will need somewhere to look to find out what you did, and what sort of house you lived in and what you looked like. It is for them that we

"collect, prepare and preserve" current Dublin history, saving newspaper clippings, photographs and other memorabilia relating to living persons and current events. Your grandchildren and great-grandchildren will come looking for these things, just as descendants of eighteenth and nineteenth century Dubliners seek the records of those times.

An Eye on the Future. We "collect, prepare and preserve" the sources of history - facts and artifacts - which are all too easily lost, unless someone takes the trouble to save them for generations to come. We, too, are conservationists - not of trees and swamps - but of individual human experience. We think it's worth it - and we hope you agree.

-John Harris

Inquiries to the Historical Society Archives



chain of title to the artifacts and papers in the schoolhouse.

"Then Bill found a list of life members. Quite a number of prudent people had paid ten dollars for life memberships in 1960, but by 1986 there weren't a great many of them left. There were, as it turned out, only eight, including Florence Henderson and Lurette Eaton, and with their help we were able to establish the corporation's continuity. We are very grateful to them."

Unearthing New Hampshire's Treasures

After the business meeting, the President introduced Rusty Bastedo, a Society Trustee, adding, "we are proud to have on our board anyone so distinguished as the New Hampshire State Curator. I'm not sure exactly what the new Hampshire State Curator does, but Rusty is going to tell us."

"Most curators," Rusty told us, deal with fixed collections, which are known, and about which information can be updated as new things come in. In New Hampshire, the State doesn't know what it owns, so I have to find out. So here a curator needs to be able to guess where things might be." Knowledge of social history and genealogy helps, he said. Illustrating his points with slides, he went on to describe some of the technical detective work he does in order to distinguish treasure from junk.

Rusty's talk was followed by wine, cheese, punch and home-baked goodies in the "Knollwood" dining room.

Other Society News

In May, as part of **Conval's Community Service Day**, nine students and one teacher spent a morning in the Dublin Cemetery helping to verify the locations of and the inscriptions on the gravestones. Many thanks to the Conval students for this valuable service. This is the final phase of the project that was started by Laura Scott in 1989. Any volunteers to help complete it?

We were very fortunate in having an intern, **Candace B. McKinniss**, from February to July, during which she prepared a synopsis and index of the diary kept by Joseph Lindon Smith during his European travels in 1886-1887. Candace moved

to Dover in July, and we shall miss both her company and her skill.

From The Schoolhouse Museum . . .

A few years ago, the Society didn't own a single piece of the **Dublin souvenir china** that was commonplace around the turn of the century. Henry D. Allison and George W. Gleason, the rival storekeepers of that era, had china objects with Dublin scenes made to order, mainly in Germany and Austria, for sale as souvenirs. In the last year or so, we have acquired 24 pieces – plates, bowls, pitchers, etc. – partly by purchase and partly through the generosity of several donors, including Nancy Shook Bender and Nancy Campbell. One interesting scallop-rimmed bowl, with roses surrounding a familiar view of the Parting of the Ways, was given by Fred and Deborah Abeles of Cheshire, Mass.

From the **Consolidated School** have come two plaques, one containing the names of the recipients of the Citizenship Awards from 1937-1946; and the other in memory of Edward B. Van Zile, Jr., a recipient of the Citizenship Award in 1939, who was killed at Iwo Jima in 1945.

The Museum is now closed for the winter.

Visitors to the Archives Building

The Executive Committee of the **New Hampshire Archives Group** held its June meeting at the Archives Building. Your President serves as Secretary/Treasurer of the Group (NHAG for short), which is a forum for archivists, professional and amateur, throughout the state.

In August, the Archives hosted the monthly meeting of the **Genealogy Group** of The Historical Society of Cheshire County. Twelve members were given a tour of the building and a demonstration of our computerized index of people and families, including birth, marriage and death records, photographs and newspaper clippings. A couple of the members had Dublin connections and were able to add to their genealogical information.

In October, seven members of the **Greenfield Historical Society**, led by their President (and

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Greenfield Selectman), Jerry Adams, visited the Archives to learn more about the building and how we keep our records. The Greenfield Historical Society is considering building an Archives facility along the lines of ours.

Richard N. Murray, Senior Curator of the National Museum of American Art in Washington (a division of the Smithsonian Institution), spent the best part of a November day at the Archives doing research on Abbott Thayer. Mr. Murray is in charge of mounting a show of Thayer's work at the National Museum. The show will open in April, 1999.

Recent Accessions

Maria Boynton, of Ithaca, N.Y., has given the Society a copy of a group photograph that includes her grandfather, Louis Agassiz Fuertes, Gerald and Gladys Thayer and Gerome Brush. Fuertes was a friend and student of Abbott Thayer, who spent the summer of 1897 living with the Thayer family in Dublin. He later became a distinguished bird painter. In addition, she has sent us a copy (from an original in the Kroch Library at Cornell) of part of an account by her great-aunt, Katherine Fuertes, of what it was like to be a houseguest of the Thayers in Dublin.

Nancy E. Campbell has added to her previous gifts a book, *The Old Farmer's Almanac Sampler*, edited by Robb Sagendorph and a pamphlet by The Historical Society of Cheshire County describing a walking tour of Keene.

A number of pieces of Henderson family memorabilia found in the house of her aunt, the late Miss Frances Henderson, have been given by **Augusta Henderson Petrone**. Most notable among these is an almost complete run of *The Dublin News*, printed and published by George and Gerald Henderson in the summers of 1908 and 1909.

Beekman Pool has given us his files as President of D.A.R.E (Dublin and Regional Emergency), an organization which worked hard for a Dublin bypass during the 1970's and 80's.

We recently discovered by chance that **Professor Raphael Pumpelly's** papers, including letters of his forebears and descendants, are at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The Huntington has kindly supplied a catalogue of this extensive collection, which may be of interest to the Professor's numerous descendants hereabouts.

Through the kindness of **Lorna Trowbridge** and the good offices of **Paul Tuller**, 243 issues of Yankee magazine – all those that were in Paul's show of the late Beatrix Sagendorph's Yankee covers – have been given to our archives by **Yankee, Inc.**

A granddaughter of Fred Adelbert Pierce, **Dorothy Pierce Shiner**, has generously given the Society copies of photographs of members of the Pierce family and of the Fred Adelbert Pierce homestead (now Paper and Roses Gift Shop).

Other welcome gifts have come from **Rusty Bastedo**, **Bruce McClellan**, **Pat Mann** and **John Nelson**. To all of them our thanks.



DUES for 1998

Enclosed is an envelope for sending in membership dues for fiscal 1998, which began on October 1.



C R E D I T S

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

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Heidi Thomas of Little House Graphics.