

Dublin Historical Society

Dublin, New Hampshire 03444 • Founded 1920

Newsletter No. 47 – July, 1999

AUTOMOTIVE ISSUE

Automobiles In *The Dublin News*



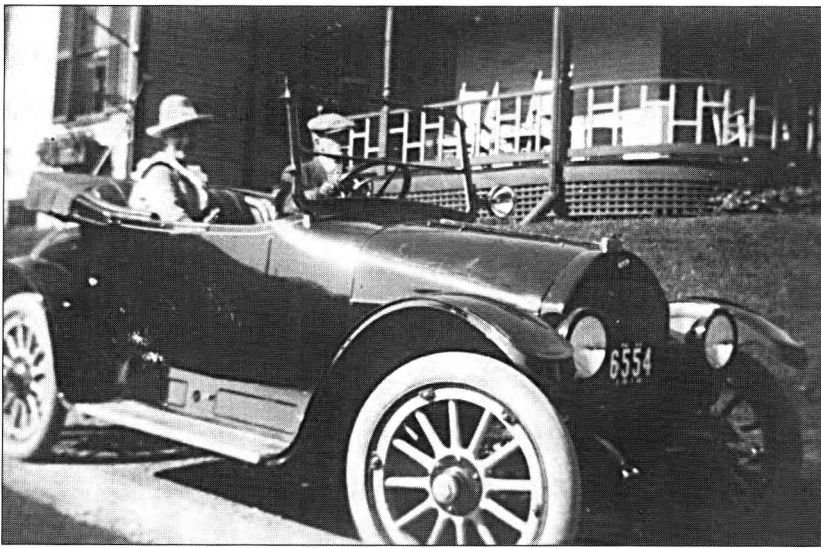
A 1906 Stanley Steamer in front of the Scribner (now Schnabel) house. (Scribner collection.)



A car of unknown – probably European – make, c. 1906. The building in the background is the cottage behind the Scribner house. (Gleason collection.)

During the summers of 1908 and 1909, two enterprising sons of Prof. Ernest Henderson, Gerard and George, published a newspaper called *The Dublin News*. Gerard was sixteen and George fourteen in July, 1908, when the first issue came out. They were apparently the paper's reporters, editors, publishers, printers and distributors, working from the Henderson summer home on Old Marlborough Road, now the Peter Brooks's.

The 25 issues of the *News* — twelve the first summer and eleven the second — contained contributions by Abbott Thayer, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Franklin MacVeagh, Jean Clemens (Mark Twain's daughter) and other worthies of the time. Its articles, including a number on Dublin history, were doubtless amusing and informative to contemporary readers and they are just as much so ninety years on. The advertisements alone are a treasure trove.



A 1918 Buick Roadster. The proud owners were Clesson and Mary Gowing. The house behind them was theirs and is now the LaFortunes'. (Gene Gowing collection.)

Among the recurrent topics was the trouble caused by the new-fangled automobile, of which there must have been a fair number in Dublin. Here are two samples:

Automobile Runs Over Cow

“On Friday last as Mr. Fred A. Adams (Chairman of Selectmen) was driving his cows from the pasture to his stable, they were met by an automobile driving at a high rate of speed, striking one of them, throwing it down, and pushing it along the road for some distance, damaging the cow badly, but not killing her outright. This is a case where the chauffeur did not use the judgment he should have possessed, by slowing up or stopping altogether if necessary.”

Fred Adams lived near Bond’s Corner in what is now Allan Van Hoogen’s house. The barn for which the cows were headed was presumably the one now occupied by Seaver & McClellan’s antique shop.

It took a while for horses to get used to automobiles. The issue of July 14, 1908, contains an account of a terrified horse pulling an ice wagon into the horsesheds behind what was then the Unitarian Church. The horse “took fright at a passing automobile descending Leffingwell’s hill, and bolted.” The following week’s issue of the News carried the following:

The Automobile Cure

“One of the less radical automobile owners of Dublin has suggested a good cure for horses that shy at automobiles. This is to arrange a day at which

Your Automobile

should be filled from our new self-measuring Bowser Gasolene Tank. Every drop is filtered through chamois. On Main Street, opposite Public Library. It is easily reached — no backing or cramping; just drive right up — don’t turn around — and drive right off again.

HENRY D. ALLISON,
DUBLIN. - - N. H.

Henry Allison ran this ad in every issue of The Dublin News.

all automobiles are at home to all nervous horses. What horse, after having made thorough acquaintance with all the internal workings of his lifeless relation, can still hold them in awe? The first meeting, we suggest, should be for beginners, and the automobile should be stationary. By degrees they could begin to blow horns and move, back, and go faster and faster each time, until they were circling around the complacent horse at a break neck speed. And the horses will only smile.”

“Horses Will Never Get Used To Them.”

Dr. Curtis A. Wood’s Plea for Banning Automobiles

The earliest automobiles in Dublin were not greeted with universal enthusiasm. One of those who looked upon them as a dangerous but temporary fad was Dublin’s resident physician, Curtis Augustine Wood. Dr. Wood made his views known in the following letter to the *Peterborough Transcript*:

“Dublin, July 18, 1901. A painful accident occurred here last Sunday which came very near being a tragedy. A party of semi-invalids were returning home from my office; they met one of those hissing, rattling, puffing, smudging, modern Juggernauts, called an ‘automobile’, tearing down a steep grade at a terrific speed. The horse, although driven by a skillful horseman, became at once unmanageable, ran into a steep bank, dumped

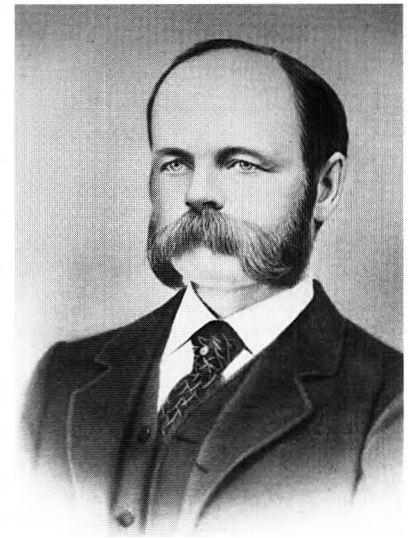
the occupants into a ditch, then ran, completely demolishing the carriage. And it was little short of a miracle that the occupants escaped with their lives.

“The advent of these steam engines has inaugurated a reign of terror in this section hardly exceeded in the west a few years since by the murderous Jesse James and his robber gang, and it will take them only a few years to exceed his record of maimed and murdered victims. No man, woman, or child is safe on the road for a moment so long as they are allowed on the highways, and if there is no law to prevent them, there should be without delay, if a special session of the legislature is required to enact the same. Horses will never get used to them. A horse once frightened by one is still more afraid at each



1912 Hudson. (Gleason collection.)

succeeding time he meets one. They are no practical good and never will be and the public should unite as one for their own safety, for safety of their wives and children, and bury the machine beyond chance of resurrection. And any man who will imperil the lives of his fellow beings by running an infernal, unmanageable engine on our public highways and that solely for his own selfish, sensuous gratification, is either a fool or a brute. If a fool he should have a guardian placed over him at once and his dangerous plaything taken from him; if a brute, he should be – treated as one. – Dr. C.A. Wood.”



Curtis Augustine Wood (1846-1902) was born in Dublin and got his M.D. degree from Dartmouth. After several years in Greenville, he returned to his family's house (until recently the Summers' bookshop) in the early 1890's, where he practiced medicine until his death.

Major Exhibition Honors Dublin's Abbott Thayer

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art has mounted an exhibition, “Abbott Thayer: The Nature of Art”, comprised of 61 of Abbott Thayer's oil paintings and watercolors. The show, in the old Patent Office Building at 8th and G Streets, opened April 23 and will run through September 6. If you have an opportunity to visit the nation's capital this summer, by all means see this exhibition, which is accompanied by an informative and well-written text. It is complemented by a sister exhibition on the same floor, “Picturing Old New England: Image and Memory”, which runs through August 22. If possible, allow time to see both exhibitions.

A good introduction to the show is Richard Meryman's article, “A Painter of Angels Became the Father of Camouflage” in the April issue of *Smithsonian* magazine.

A contingent of Dubliners who traveled to Washington for the opening of “Abbott Thayer: The Nature of Art” were hosted for dinner following the museum opening by the daughters of former Dublin summer residents Payson and Florence Rowe. Pam Peabody and Barbara deMarneffe and their spouses offered dinner on an evening when every tulip and flowering tree in Washington was in bloom. The Peabody / deMarneffe hospitality was much appreciated by all those attending, and a grand time was had by all.

– Russell Bastedo

CALENDAR NOTES

ANNUAL MEETING

of the

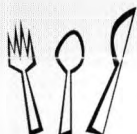
DUBLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thursday, August 19, at 8:00 p.m.

at the new auditorium of the

DUBLIN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL

After a short business meeting, **Richard Meryman** will give an illustrated talk on "Abbott Thayer: Angels and Camouflage".



At 6:30 p.m. on the same evening, there will be a **picnic buffet** on the lawn of the 1841 schoolhouse to benefit the schoolhouse maintenance fund.

See enclosed notice.

Keeping the old schoolhouse in repair is a constant expense, and the fund raised several years ago is now exhausted. We hope that all members who can will come to the dinner, and that those who can't will nevertheless be moved to contribute to the 1841 Schoolhouse fund.

The **winter pot-luck supper** will be in the Vestry of the Community Church on Friday, February 18, 2000 (snow date February 25). **Howard Mansfield** will speak under the auspices of the New Hampshire Humanities Council on the subject of his forthcoming book: "The Same Ax Twice — Restoration and Renewal in a Throwaway Age".

FAIR WARNING!

The **Joseph Lindon Smith** show at the Thorne-Sagendorph Gallery in Keene, which includes material loaned by this Society, closes August 4.

The **Abbott Thayer** exhibition at the National Museum of American Art in Washington closes September 6.

OTHER COMING EVENTS

The August 9 meeting of the Dublin Riding & Walking Club will be at Loon Point, and will include a **historical walking tour** along Lake Road. For more information call 563-8640.

Dublin Days are (is?) Sunday, August 15, and will include a bus tour of historic sites, guided by Steena Auchincloss and John Harris. For more information call 563-8306.

The **Fitchburg Art Museum** (185 Elm Street, Fitchburg, Mass.) is mounting an exhibition of **images of Mt. Monadnock**. The show will run from September 26 to January 9, and will include items loaned by the Dublin Historical Society.

Winter 1999 Meeting Features Calvin Coolidge

The flu season was in full swing last February, but forty Historical Society members braved the elements to hear a fascinating presentation on one of our least well-known American presidents, Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933). Coolidge was Vice President for President Warren G. Harding, who died in office in 1923. Coolidge was subsequently elected to a full term in 1924, and then declined renomination in 1928, saying that he had done what he could do well.

Despite enormous popularity with the American electorate, he retired to his home in Northampton, Mass., visiting the White House only once after his years in office.

A sympathetic biography of Coolidge was written in the 1930s by Claude Moore Fuess, a former Dublin summer resident. Contemporary historians, however, have given Coolidge short shrift, in good part because of the focus on the years of the Great Depression. But film maker John Karol has devoted ten years of his life and a \$2 million budget to researching the 1920s, and to finding and then conserving acetate film images of our thirtieth President. Mr. Karol, whose documentaries have received critical acclaim, including an Oscar nomination, has in hand eighty hours of film on Coolidge, which he is boiling down to a few hours of what he hopes will be a national broadcast.

Dublin Historical Society members viewed a one-hour video culled from Mr. Karol's many hours of film, and the audience was fascinated by the presentation. The 1920s and Calvin Coolidge came alive that night.

— Russell Bastedo

C R E D I T S

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

Design & layout by Heidi Thomas
of Little House Graphics.

We are grateful to Michael Worcester for identifying the cars illustrated above.