

The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Volume XV, Number 2 Summer 2011

Three Generations of the Weatherbee Family

by Phyllis Weatherbee and Janet-Yelch Weatherbee



Five Weatherbee Siblings

(back) Phil, Gail, (front) Kermit, Bob, Lee

One of the best-loved families in Dover-Foxcroft is the Weatherbee family. Many people remember their plumbing and hardware stores – first on Main Street, next to the Old Opera house, then on North Street.

The patriarch of the Dover-Foxcroft branch was Guy Weatherbee. Born May 19, 1864, in Lee, he ran a hardware store in Milo for many years. In approximately 1910 he settled in Foxcroft, where he became a partner in B.A. Thomas's plumbing and stove business. Within a few years he became the sole owner. Soon he was joined by his son Earle. They renamed the business Guy Weatherbee and then finally Weatherbee Plumbing Co. Guy did some wonderful charcoal drawings.

Flora, born in Enfield May 9, 1872, was the daughter of Dexter and Clara McKenney Messer. She was very active in civic affairs, being a member of the Lend-a-Hand and

Mission Circle of the Universalist Church and of the Ladies of the G.A.R. She lived here until her death in February of 1956. Guy and his wife Flora had two children, Earl and Effie. Flora was a resident of Dover-Foxcroft over 45 years, dying February 17, 1956.

Guy's sister Effie was born May 18, 1897. She taught school high school for 15 years, first in Mattawamkeag and then in Gorham. She married Edwin Peters in 1936. They had no children. Effie was very active in civic affairs, being president of the Percolator Club and treasurer of both the Cosmopolitan Club and the Universalist Church; she was also a member of the board of trustees of the Thompson Free Library. Effie died in Dover-Foxcroft on September 11, 1975.

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The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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The Society's legal address is 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426. The *Shiretown Conserver* is published quarterly. Contact the editor at 874 West Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, Me 04426 or e-mail chrism@roadrunner.com, or by phone at 207-564-2666

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Enjoyable Meetings

This season's monthly meetings of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society have begun. The theme of these meetings this year is the Civil War. For the first presentation in April, Lou Stevens discussed the contribution made by local men (and women) to the war. For the second presentation, in May, Wayne Bennett discussed the 1st Maine Cavalry and its Colonel, Calvin Douty of Dover. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be June 1st at Thayer Parkway at 7:00pm.

Public Hearing

On Monday, June 13th the Historical Society will hold a public hearing at 6:30 at the town office to inform and discuss plans to apply for a "Community for Maine's Future" grant for work on Central Hall. Each attendee will sign the attendance sheet to indicate their support. Part of the selection process involves evaluating community support. Your signature will go a long way to helping us to get this grant. For more information, contact Tim Burleigh, tburleigh@myfairpoint.net Please join us in showing the our support for this project.



Ferne, eldest child of Earl and Vivian Weatherbee, died Feb 16 at home in Foxcroft at the age of 2 years, 1 month and 12 days. She was a beautiful child with a smile for everyone, and beloved by all who knew her. The following beautiful lines were written by a friend. (in *The Piscataquis Observer*, February 17, 1920)

Ferne Weatherbee

Jesus stood by the shining gate
Waiting an angel's return,
He had sent him down to the troubled earth
To bring back little Ferne

For He needed her in his angel band
To make our spirits yearn,
For a land which had always seemed so strange
Till it sheltered little Ferne.

So we'll think with joy of our Heavenly Home
Though with tears our eyelids burn
For we know she is waiting to greet us there
Our darling little Ferne

Emma Blake
Dover-Foxcroft

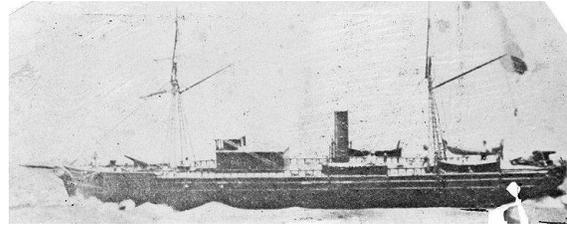
Civil War Letters

This is the second of the letters in the Society's collection of a number of letters written during the Civil War from Fred Kimball to his family in Dover-Foxcroft. For more information on Mr. Kimball and his life, see the Spring 2011 issue of the Conserver

Fred Kimball writes to his father –

“U. S. Ship *Ohio*
Boston Sept 11, 1864

Dear Father,



After more than a week's time spent in Bangor, Portland and Boston, I find myself onboard the U. S. Receiving Ship *Ohio* sitting in one of the ports holes on the gun deck with a full rig of navy blue on and of not much more account than most any common Irishman who behaves himself as well as I, but I don't care for that. I suppose Putnam has told you all about ourselves up to the time we left the *Sabine* (which was right before last at about 6 P.M) so I need not write much about that. I was examined and passed without difficulty the doctor could not find a blemish on me.

It is almost impossible for me to hear myself think they make so much noise here. Chauncey is setting here nearby with a big plug nosed Irishman who has a song book and first one and then the other opens on the songs as they turn them over. It is just so all over the ship. We came from the *Sabine* here in the steamer Montreal, had very good accommodations. (forward cabin)

This is a nasty ship to be in anyway, so everybody says – Perhaps it is kept so intentionally so that the men when drafted off the ship will be glad to go knowing that any change whatever must be for the better.

They had a draft here yesterday for the “Colorado”: she is laying in Portsmouth now I believe waiting for the crew –

Chauncey is waiting for me to finish so he may write a line to his folks. Ben wrote to his mother a few minutes ago. I don't like the chance here for writing quite as well as at the desk in the stores as I have to hold the paper in my lap – I cannot give you much information about myself. I don't know when I shall leave the ship, perhaps in a few days, possibly not for a month. Tell mother I am well and am enjoying myself very well. I must make room for Jack to write now by closing, as it is getting late. I send my love to all –

Direct to U. S. Receiving Ship *Ohio* –
Your Son,
Fred

PS I forgot to tell you that I got into Office the first thing, on board the *Sabine*. In signing the papers there, they noticed my writing and had me in the yeoman's office or room taking a ct of ship's stores as they were delivered out - I didn't want to stay and so managed to get out of it in haste. Fred”

**CIRCUS CAME TO TOWN LAST FRIDAY AFTERNOON
Pleasant Street School Pupils Put on Show Before Large Audience**

These two headlines appeared on the front page of the *Piscataquis Observer* on May 20, 1943, above this photo and caption:



Back row, 1 to r: Sidney Day, David Katon, Earl Lovejoy, Marilyn Crocker, Ann Hall, Maurice Batchelder. Front row: Corinne Judkins, Norman Cookson, Bruce MacDonal, Anne Snow, and Roy Lord. (Corinne Judkins and Ann Hall are cousins of the author)

The opening paragraph of the story said: "One of the outstanding events of the school year took place on Friday (My 14, 1943) afternoon at Pleasant Street school in the form of a Circus Party."

Then it told how the students of the sub-primary, as the kindergarten class was called then; First and Second grades of North Street school were brought by their teachers across town at 1:30 to the Pleasant Street building.

(continued on page five)

[While they are walking along, let's look at the teachers for both schools as listed in the Observer in the issue just before school started back in September for 1942-3. Pleasant Street School: Martha Green, sub-primary; Corinne Johnson, 1; Ola Blood, 2; Helen Pratt, 3; Margaret Mesereau, 4; and Ava Goff, 5 and principal. North Street School: Dorothy Greenlaw, sub-primary; Louise MacFadyen, 1; Dorothy Packard, 2; Mildred Pratt, 3; Marion Rollins, 4; Mildred Hewett, 5; and Harriette Crockett, principal and 6, and classroom D; and Doris Hathorn, extra room.]

It is easy to imagine the great surprise that greeted the children. The reporter wrote: "The center of interest was in the First Grade room, where a miniature circus had been constructed as a result of a reading project. The room was gaily decorated with hundreds of multi-colored balloons, lending a circus atmosphere to the occasion."

After buying their tickets, the audience could follow a sawdust trail where they passed by "...the cages of the wild animals, several sideshows, a cleverly constructed merry-go-round and finally the big tent. The audience could take seats on bleachers that filled the inside of the big top to see the trained elephants and a cowboy show. Clowns were doing their stunts."

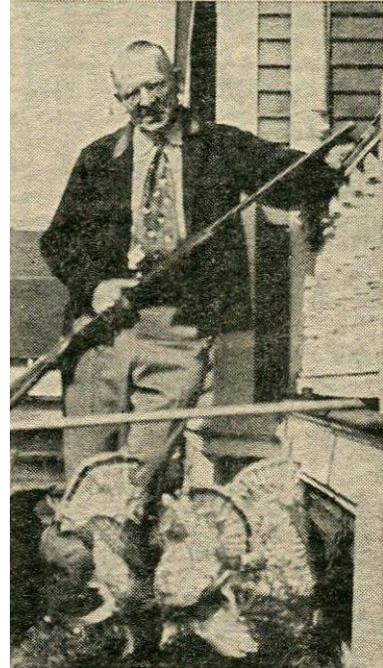
The news story continued: "When the guests had found seats, the ringmaster, Bruce MacDonald, appeared complete in tail coat and top hat, and in a very impressive manner acted as master of ceremonies during the following program: songs by sub-primary, The Elephant, The Tiger, The Lion; specialty song, Bruce MacDonald; rhythmic plays, The Circus Parade, grade 2; play, The Clown Who Couldn't Read; side show, Cinderella, grade 2; songs by the sub-primary, The Clown, The Merry-go-round."

But there were more treats to come. The Observer said, "At the close of the program, several diminutive popcorn men presented each child with a bag of popcorn, and each person also received a gay balloon." The final paragraph said: "The circus party will be an event long-remembered by the 200 children who attended. Judging by the smiles on the 11 performers seen in the photo, they had surely enjoyed bringing a circus to town that afternoon 68 years ago."

Louis Stevens

(Weatherbees, continued from page 1)

Earl was born in West Enfield June 25, 1893. He joined his father in the plumbing and heating business in Dover and expanded it to include hardware. Later, for a short time, they ran a hardware store in Guilford as well. He too was active in civic affairs, being a member of Kineo Lodge, IOOF and of the Sebec Lake Fish & Game Association. He was an avid fisherman, and he enjoyed hunting and bowling. Earl married Vivian Berry from Brownville Junction in 1916. They had 6 children. Ferne, the oldest, died of scarlet fever when she was about 3. Vivian also had scarlet fever at the same time Ferne did and was so ill, no one was sure she would survive. She was too ill to attend the funeral of her eldest child. Gail Jane was the second child and still an infant when Ferne died. The third child was Guy Robert (Bob). The fourth child was Kermit Roosevelt (Kerm). The fifth child was Philip Earl (Phil) and the sixth was Lee, who was 6 years younger than Phil. Earl died September 20, 1958.



Earl's spouse, Vivian (Berry) Weatherbee was born in Brownville Junction September 21, 1898. She was a trustee of the Congregational Church, the Cosmopolitan Club, a trustee of Mayo Hospital, a member of the Town Club, Community Garden Club, the Original Christmas Club, and the Women's Fellowship of the Congregational Church.

Vivian was one of the town's fine folk artists and worked on many projects in various media. She helped make the Santa Sleigh and reindeer that is displayed at the academy during the Christmas Season. She painted scenery for the plays and programs at the Central Hall. She also painted furniture as well as some fine oils and did wood carvings. In addition, she made dolls and doll furniture. She was a kind woman and reportedly had a wonderful sense of humor which all of her children seemed to inherit. She worked in the hardware store off and on before the store was turned over to Phil and Bob, who ran it for almost thirty years.

She died on November 23, 1964, after a long illness and, like many of the Weatherbees, was buried in the family plot in the Dover (Brown) Cemetery.

(continued on page 7)

Earl and Vivian had six children, two girls and four boys. The oldest child, Ferne, died as a young child (see page two of this issue). The next child was Guy Robert ("Bob"). He was born November 28, 1919. He was a partner in Weatherbee's Plumbing and Hardware store for more than 40 years. Bob did all of the sheet metal work and plumbing and could do almost anything mechanical (I always considered him a mechanical genius). Phil ran the other parts of the business. They worked well together and the business flourished under their care.

Bob was a talented artist and did carving, woodwork and great photography. His walking sticks were a delight with their intricate carving. Bob married Ruth Comeau and they had two children: Jeff, who currently works for the Dover Police Dept after retiring from the army and Janice, who now lives in Arizona and works in a medical office. Bob and Ruth had a long and very happy marriage, over 50 years, and participated in many activities together. People often said "BOB and RUTH" as if it were one word. There are many wonderful, outrageous stories about their adventures. Both of them had a deep enjoyment of life and an ability to see the absurd. Bob died January 28, 1997.

The next Weatherbee child was Gail, born in 1918. She went to Foxcroft Academy, as did all of the children, and then on to Art School in Boston. She also is a fine artist and worked in various media, including oils, water colors, and acrylics, and she wrote a children's story called "Percival the Pig," which she illustrated. She continued working in various art media throughout her life. In her early twenties she married a man in the Coast Guard and they had three children, who now reside in other States. They were married for over 60 years before her husband's death in 1998. Gail, like all of the Weatherbees, had a wonderful sense of humor and gift for enjoying life. Gail, now in her nineties, is the only sibling of that generation alive and is residing in California with her son and his wife.

The fourth child, Kermit, was born April 29, 1921, in Dover-Foxcroft. He was a mailman for many years, delivering a city mail route from the 1950's until his retirement in 1976. Called the "whistling mailman," he was popular with the people on his route. He married Phyllis Dixon from Sebec and they had one child, David. Kermit loved to dance, garden, hunt, fish and sing. He sang in the church choir for many years and had a wonderful voice. David writes, "One of my most nostalgic memories of Dad is of early morning at camp on Sebec Lake. We were extremely lucky to be able to spend the summers at Aunt Martha's cottage at Steadman's Landing in return for Dad doing maintenance to keep it in good repair for the times that Martha was able to jet back to Maine. While we had a shower with hot water, Dad used to enjoy an early morning swim with a bar of soap to clean up for the day. I remember him standing on the end of the dock singing 'Oh, What a Beautiful Morning' at the tip of his lungs. While I didn't really appreciate it at the time, he had a great voice and could carry a tune much better than most. I only wish he could know how much I cherish that memory."

Kermit served in the army in World War II. Like almost all of the Weatherbees, he was active in the civic and social affairs in the town. He belonged to the American Legion for 54 years. He was also a member of the VFW and a long-time member of the I.O.O.F. He was a proud member of the Physically Challenged Club at the YMCA.

(continued on next page)

(the **Weatherbees**, from page 7)



Phil pitches for D&F

Phil, the fifth child was born May 23, 1925. He always drew pictures, which he called "doodling," and then after retirement from the store, did many pen/ink and oil pencil drawings that were fanciful and delightful. The stories he sometimes wrote to go with his drawings reflected his sense of humor. He had a very quick wit. Phil always said that he excelled in recess, fun, social activities and sports in school and did not do well with academics in which he had no interest. There are many stories of mischief when he was a teenager and young man. He played semi- professional baseball in the catcher position and tried out for the Boston Red Sox. He was told that he had a "great arm but couldn't hit the side of a barn" so was not accepted by the Sox. Every year he rooted for the Red Sox and was disappointed that they did not win another pennant. Just before he died, the Red Sox won the World Series, and he said he could die having seen that wish fulfilled. Phil married Patricia Herring and they had two children. The eldest, Jon, died when he was 18 in an industrial accident. Pam married, has two children, and now works at Foxcroft Academy. After the death of his first wife, Phil married his second wife, Janet Yelch, in 1983. They were married for 23 years until his death in 2005. Phil served in the U.S. Army at the end of World War II and was stationed in Panama.

Lee, born in 1932, was an honor student at Foxcroft Academy and attended Tufts University after high school graduation. He continued his education and became a medical doctor, practicing pathology. He was the medical examiner for one of the counties in Michigan, where he and his family settled . He worked for many years as the pathologist for a large veterans' hospital in Michigan. He also did research on liver diseases and was honored for that work at the time of his death in 1995. He and his wife, Ellen, had three children, Ann, Brent and Julie, who all live in Michigan.

Bob, Kerm and Phil were excellent athletes, including playing on undefeated FA football teams in 1937, 1939 and 1940.



1937 Undefeated FA team – Bob on the left, Kermit on the right



1940 FA Basketball
Phil 2nd from left in front row

Message from Mary

The historical society is gearing up for another busy summer. We have the Whoopie Pie Festival scheduled for June 25 and Homecoming for the weekend of August 6. Events will be going on in Central Hall these weekends as well. Keep an eye on the newspapers for updates.

I will be calling soon to set up the hosting schedule. We'll be open again on Thursdays with our Grand Opening set for June 25. The Blacksmith Shop will open on Memorial Day weekend. I hope you can plan to stop in and check out our two new exhibits at the Observer Building – the story of our Kiwanis Club and a Civil War display. I hope you will say yes to hosting; the folks who do have a good time and meet all kinds of interesting people.

Annual Dues

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2011. We really appreciate having you as a member. If you haven't sent in your dues yet, please do so now so you can continue to enjoy all of the benefits of membership in the Historical Society, including receiving copies of the *Conserver*.

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society – Membership Application Form

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street: _____ City/State/Zip _____

E-Mail: _____

Annual Dues are \$10 per person and \$7.00 for senior memberships. Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, 874 West Main Street, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover January to December. If you are giving a gift membership, please include the name and address and we'll gladly notify the recipient of your gift.

The Society is on the Web at www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs and on Facebook.

Our Corporate Sponsors

A grateful thank you to the following businesses whose funds support the Society and its efforts to preserve our history. When you shop or see these folks, please tell them 'thank you' for their support!

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Hibbard Nursing Home
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Mallett Real Estate
Mayo Regional Hospital
McKusick Petroleum
Rowell's Garage
Steinke and Caruso Dental Care
Mark Stitham, M.D.
Sean Stitham, M.D.

2011 Christmas Ornament

We have just received the new 2011 glass Christmas ornament. As you can see, this year's ornament is of the Thompson Free Library. These and all other ornaments are available for \$6.00 each + \$4.00 shipping

Other Items Available

Glass Christmas ornaments:

- 2008/Blacksmith Shop
- 2009/Observer Building and
- 2010/Central Hall

DVD's \$10.00 + \$3.00 shipping

- Scenes of old Dover and Foxcroft:
- Louis Stevens and memories of Central Hall

Throws: \$38.00 + \$8.00 shipping

Some of these items are available at Mr. Paperback.

Work Day at the Historical Society

Thursdays are almost always workdays at the Historical Society. We generally start work at about 10:00 and work from two to four or five hours. If you are interested in joining us for an interesting and enjoyable day working with good friends, contact Mary for more information. At the moment we are cataloging thousands of old *Observer* photos. Come along and help us identify folks in those pictures.



FRIENDS OF CENTRAL HALL

FUNDRAISING BRICKS

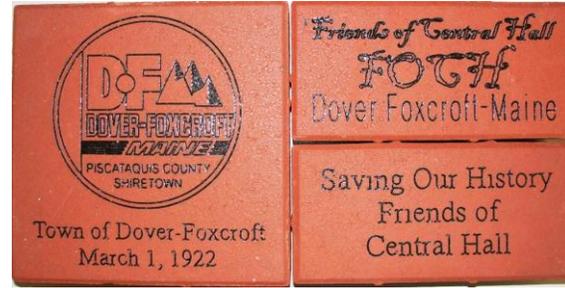
FOCH BRICK ORDER FORM



Help Friends of Central Hall (FOCH) preserve and restore CENTRAL HALL by purchasing your engraved brick. Buy a brick in memory of a loved one, your children or family. Buy a brick to promote your business or organization. Artwork or your business logo can be added to the engraved bricks. Each sponsored brick would be a visible part of the walkway to a newly renovated CENTRAL HALL in downtown Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. All proceeds raised from the commemorative brick program will be used toward the restoration of CENTRAL HALL.

ENGRAVED BRICKS are 4"x8" or 8"x8" and allow for 15 spaces per line and up to 6 lines of text. Clip-Art and business logos can be added for an extra fee. We have selected Moonbeam Laser Engraving of Levant, Maine. The "Whitaker Greer #30" clay brick, a beveled edge brick, and vector engraving enable the etching to turn into glass. Create a lasting memory for a loved one or promote your business or

organization for a lifetime, by contributing to the preservation of Dover-Foxcroft town history.



Please fill out order form below and return to: **FRIENDS OF CENTRAL HALL**, Attention: Mary Annis, 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft ME 04426, or call Mary at 564-0820. Please make your check or money order payable to: **Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society**.

_____ 4"x8" ENGRAVED BRICK(s) with 15 spaces/line and (3) lines of print	\$100.00	\$ _____
_____ 8"x8" ENGRAVED BRICK(s) with 15 spaces/line and (6) lines of print	\$200.00	\$ _____
_____ Basic Logo you supply in .eps format - add \$50.00 per brick	\$50.00/ea	\$ _____
_____ In addition to, or in place of purchasing a brick, I wish to donate to FOCH	DONATION	\$ _____
	TOTAL	\$ _____

(For additional artwork options or clip-art details, contact Bob and Lisa Bemis, Moonbeam Laser Engraving, 207-884-8372)

PLEASE USE LINES BELOW FOR YOUR TEXT – 15 spaces each including punctuation and spaces - text will be centered

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____

Line 4: _____

Line 5: _____

Line 6: _____

Please provide contact information below:

Name(s) or Business Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Email Address _____

**VISIT CENTRAL HALL at upcoming events: June 25th – CENTRAL HALL Craft Fair during WHOOPIE PIE DAY
August 5th – CENTRAL HALL Ice Cream Social during SHIRETOWN HOMECOMING**

The mission of the Friends of Central Hall is to preserve, restore to its former glory, maintain, and operate Central Hall as an event center that showcases small town America and promotes a vibrant Main Street by joining forces with those seeking to revitalize the community.

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Main Street from Monument Square, before 1900. B.A. Thomas's (later Weatherbee's) plumbing store is in the two buildings on the left just before the bridge. The building just before the bridge was the original Foxcroft Academy building, moved to this spot when the "new" Academy building was built in 1853. All of these buildings were destroyed in the Opera House fire on January 1, 1936.

(The photo in the last issue of the *Conservator* was of a display counter at Koritsky's Department store – now in the Historical Society.)