



# The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Volume 17, Number 3

Autumn 2014

## The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Turns 50!

### Chapter 3

By Mary Annis



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As we continue our story into the 1990's, Madelyn Betts is still our Secretary writing wonderful poems for the dues notices and keeping impeccable records. Margaret Dunham, wife of President George, is now the treasurer, keeping a close watch on our treasury of just over \$2,000. The Blacksmith Shop remains open on the honor system. The beginning of 1990 shows the Blacksmith Shop Museum now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On May 16, 1991, the founder of the historical society, George L. Dunham, passed away. He had been president since the beginning. In the dues notice of March 1992, Madelyn writes "The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society and The Blacksmith Shop Museum has lost a dedicated worker and friend. George's devotion to the Blacksmith Shop continued daily from his first idea and efforts to organize the project up until his final days."

In mid 1991, David Lockwood, who lives near the Blacksmith Shop Museum, took on the responsibility of curator at the shop. One of his first enhancements was working with brother-in-law, Wilson Nuite, as they did some needed landscaping. Tall grass and overgrown shrubs were cut down. Weeds and rocks were cleared from the neighboring field, opening up the view of the historic structure.

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## The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| President       | Mary I. Annis   |
| Vice President  | Dennis Lyford   |
| Secretary       | Priscilla Higgins   |
| Treasurer       | Jim Annis   |
| Membership Sec. | Chris Maas  |
| Directors       | Sylvia Dean<br>Andy MacDougall<br>Chris Maas<br>Dennis Lyford<br>David Lockwood<br>Sean Letarte<br>Irene Thomas |

|                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Curator, Blacksmith | David Lockwood |
| Curator, Obs. Bldg. | Dennis Lyford  |
| Editor, Conserver   | Chris Maas     |
| Webmaster           | Chris Maas     |
| Historic Advisor    | Chris Maas     |

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](mailto:chrism@roadrunner.com), or by phone at 207-717-2666

Visit us on-line at  
[www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~medfhs)  
and on Facebook

Tim Burleigh, our Vice-President and Susan Burleigh, our Secretary have sold their home and will be moving back to Florida to be with their son. We will certainly miss them, they have been a real asset to the Society. We wish them well and many happy years in Florida. We now have a new Vice-President – Dennis Lyford has stepped forward. Our new Secretary is Priscilla Higgins, who will do an excellent job. Priscilla does her share of travelling, so Irene Thomas will pick up the duties when Priscilla is away. That left an opening on our Board of Directors – Andy MacDougall has filled this spot. We certainly send a super thank you to these folks.



## The Quill Toaster

By Fred Farrington Washburn

If I were a big fat porcupine  
I know what I'd do all the time –  
I'd build a fire up in the hills  
And toast marshmallows on my quills.

Think how convenient it would be  
With me in your homey, hollow tree –  
For it really wouldn't cost a dime  
To toast six boxes at a time.

Humans are a lot of boasters  
With all their electric stoves and toasters,  
But it sometimes takes us clumsy fellows  
To think up ways to toast marshmallows.

## The Cat and the Chick-a-dee

By Fred Farrington Washburn

A green-eyed cat once softly purred  
Sweet flattery to a little bird  
That perched upon a leafy limb  
Almost directly over him.

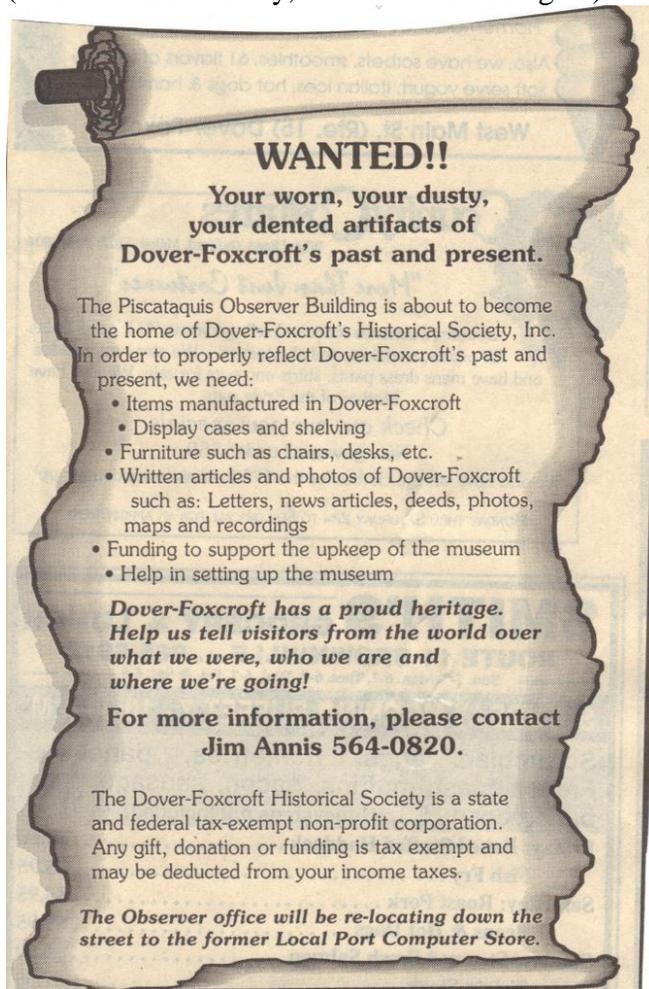
Said he, "What a lovely bird you are –  
I used to know your Ma and Pa!  
To me they always looked so sweet—  
And you look good enough to eat."

But little bird was much too wise  
To be deceived by those green eyes.  
Said he, "Take back your flattery, sir –  
I understand your kind of purr.

Don't think that you are fooling me –  
I'm much too wise a chick-a-dee.  
I know what happened to Ma and Dad –  
So scat, old cat, you make me mad."

(both from Facts and Fables, 1958)

(Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, continued from Page 1)



Thanks to the efforts of Dave Lockwood, in May of 1993 the Blacksmith Shop Museum was awarded a needs assessment grant from the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property. The grant amount was \$6,110. and allowed two professionals to spend two days at the shop assessing any needs the building may have. They provided us with a very comprehensive report.

We now jump ahead a couple of years to March of 1995. A meeting was held on March 1 at the Thompson Free Library to reorganize the society. The society had been limping along for some time and it was now time to decide to disband or rejuvenate the group. About 20 people attended and it was decided to keep going. There had been an offer of a building downtown to house a museum, but a non-profit status needed to be established before any building could be accepted. A meeting was scheduled for April 5 at the Observer Office. At the April meeting a new slate of officers was elected, and it was decided to approach Kevin Stitham to work on our 501(c)3 application and to discuss accepting the Observer Building which had been offered by Northeast Publishing. The new officers elected were: Mary Annis, President Lois Reynolds, Vice-President;

Madelyn Betts, Secretary; Jim Annis, Treasurer; and Directors - James Brown, Helen Kelly, Joe Champeon, Lou Stevens and Jane Stitham. Dave Lockwood was made "official" curator of the Blacksmith Shop.

Our first order of business was to create a set of by-laws. Kevin Stitham agreed to obtain our tax free status and the officers began to meet to discuss the offer of the Observer Building. It was a huge undertaking with many questions – the largest being "Could we make a success of a new museum?" Madelyn Betts, the person who had been with the Society the longest, sat in the Annis' living room and said "What do we have to lose? If we fail, we could always sell the building." The feeling of the rest was – if Madelyn felt that way – why not try! So on June 12, 1996 an official vote was taken and we contacted Northeast Publishing and gave them our answer. It took over a year for the Piscataquis Observer to find a new home and to get all the paperwork settled but on July 16 of 1997, Roger Tremblay, Director of Operations for Northeast Publishing, came to the Observer Building, and with the officers and directors in attendance, the Observer Building was signed over to the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society.

In anticipation of the gift, the Society put an ad in the Observer asking for items to be donated. The museum has a large first floor – the area to be used as a museum – and we needed not only historic items but display cases, etc. Items started to arrive now that we had a proper place to save paper items, textiles and other artifacts. After the building was officially ours, we began slowly with the first room. The display was simple – just some historic photos and items, but it gave us a presence in downtown Dover and we could be open for visitors.

(Continued on page 4)

(Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)



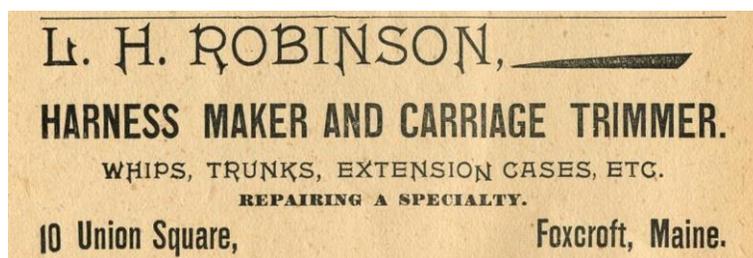
We set up a meeting schedule - one we still follow today. Our annual meeting occurs in April, with meetings in May, June, September and October. We have always tried to provide interesting talks and informative programs. During these years we met in the meeting room at Central Maine Power, thanks to our connection with Joe Champeon.

Our first fundraiser was a calendar. We did this for several years, using historic photos and it was quite successful. Another project was the beginning of our newsletter, the *Shiretown Conserver*. We published the first issue in the Spring of 1997. Foxcroft Academy was very helpful in this endeavor, sharing the names and addresses of their alumni. The response was wonderful – gaining over 300 new members, many of whom are with us today. Each newsletter carries at least two historic stories and news of the Society. We have published four issues each year since then.

In April 1998 we were notified of a \$50,000 anonymous gift made to us through the Maine Community Foundation. This generous donor designated the interest to be used in the upkeep of the Observer Building.

We announced in August of 1998 that the Observer Building had been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to Earle Shettleworth, director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, our building is the only wooden flat-iron building in the State of Maine. Quite an honor! The announcement came just before we celebrated our first anniversary with the help of Northeast Publishing. We held an open house and could share several exhibits including Francis Bickmore's barber shop, Dr. Leo Robbin's dentist office and a wonderful Dyer and Hughes pump organ donated by Ruby Williams. We were even given a short concert by Madelyn Betts who played the organ for us. The open house was a big success with over 140 people visiting. Lou Stevens led tours through the building, sharing his many memories of working there. Mary Annis cut and served the anniversary cake. It was a fun Saturday.

We now come to a good "stopping" point as we begin not only a new decade but a new century. We continue to grow our membership and have an active group of workers. Our treasury stands at just over \$8500 and the wonderful \$50,000 endowment. We have come a long way. The final installment of our history will appear in the next *Conserver*.



**Dr. Henry A. Robinson, DDS and Good Citizen  
(1840-1902)**

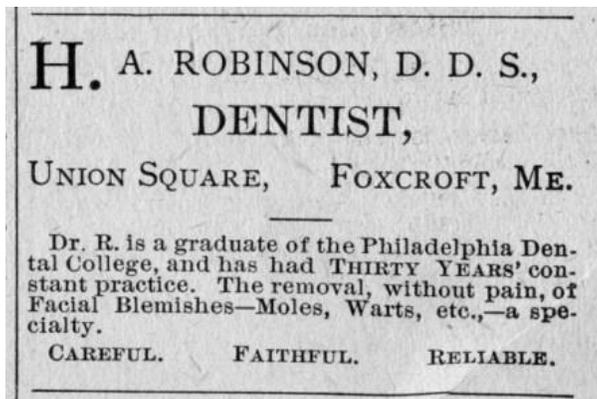
Compiled by Lou Stevens



When Dr. Henry A. Robinson DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) worked in his dental office in what is now Monument Square, it was with humans, but at his home at 16 Summer Street he worked-with fruit trees and vines to adapt them to our Maine winters and survive to produce fruit the next summer. The following article, printed 113 years ago in the issue of June 6, 1901, in the Piscataquis Observer, was written by H. L. Leland (no full names given)

The past autumn we met Dr. H. A. Robinson in McNaughton's store with several varieties of gooseberries. The Doctor always talks fruit when meeting with an interested listener. So after sampling his gooseberries, several varieties being not only luscious but a single gooseberry making a mouthful, of course then and there determined to secure some bushes the coming spring. Just farmer fashion we proposed well but failed in performance; so busy putting in spring crops, the 20th of May and no gooseberry bushes-then a hasty call at the Doctor's and we were told what we already knew, that it was too late, so we wait till September and then--.

“I feel just as if I must pen a few lines of what I saw and learned in listening to the Doctor whom I found at work among his fruit, trees, bushes, and vines. The extent of his operations was a surprise. Why, seeing so many varieties and such large numbers, we thought this is certainly worthy to be termed a Fruit Experimental Station. In just a few moments time the enthusiastic owner showed us about the grounds and pointed out the many varieties of fruit being grown and tested with observations of their history and performance. It would be presumptuous to attempt anything like a full description of what the Doctor is accomplishing in the fruit line.



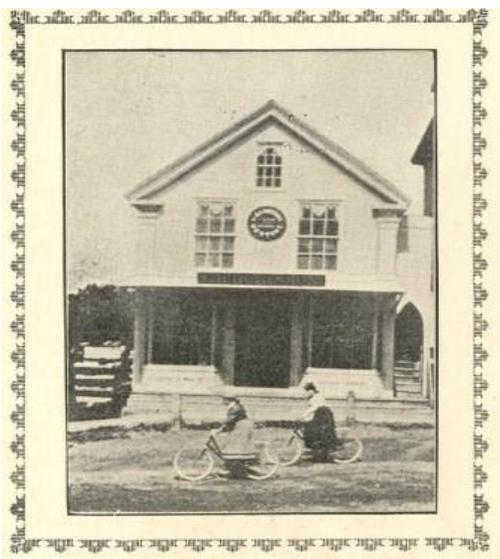
(Continued on Page 6)

(Dr. Robinson, Continued from page 5).

To appreciate what Dr. Robinson is doing the work must be seen, and the story of the work heard from the enthusiastic owner. For years, the Doctor has been engaged in experimenting in fruit culture. While he has met many failures, his enthusiasm never wanes. He has not only experimented with and tested home fruits, but has secured varieties almost worldwide. In leaving the grounds the Doctor remarked that his work in fruit testing had not proved a-money making business but he has secured that which is much better--knowledge and enjoyment. We add, the value that will and must accrue to the community in determining the hardy varieties and best qualities of fruit to grow in these years of intellectual study by Dr. H. A. Robinson, will add to the prosperity and happiness of all the people.” H. L. Leland

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### **From the 1899 Souvenir Book**



Henry A. Robinson, Foxcroft, dentist, is the son of Capt. Leonard and Mary (Purrington) Robinson, and was born in Foxcroft, March 6, 1840. Beginning at the age of sixteen, he taught successfully in the public schools for five winters. In January, 1862, he commenced the study of dentistry, and in 1867 graduated from the Philadelphia Dental College. He married, in 1860, Addie M., daughter of Hiram and Adriana (Allen) Stacy, of Foxcroft. They have two children, born in '61 and '77. Progressive and liberal, years ago he furnished and placed, at his own expense, name-boards on all the streets and squares of both these villages; and he at that time greatly desired to establish, and as a life-work care for, an ideal public park in Foxcroft village, but was defeated in securing the necessary land.

The doctor takes much interest in orcharding and gardening, and is a life member of the Maine State Pomological Society. He is also a member of Lodge, Chapter, and Commandery of Masons. In 1869, he purchased the building No. 10 Union Sq., Foxcroft, cut of which appears herewith, the second story of which has always been his office. The store below is now occupied by his son Leonard H. Robinson, dealer in harnesses, robes, trunks, etc. His daughter Alice Hope Robinson graduated from Foxcroft Academy in 1896, valedictorian of the largest class ever sent out from that institution. Of late the doctor has made a special study of the treatment of blemishes of the skin, and is making their removal, without pain or scar, a marked success. Six United States patents issued to him attest his inventive genius. Dr. Robinson is registered in both dentistry and medicine under the laws of the State. He is also a member of the Maine Academy of Medicine and Science, Portland.

(Continued on Page 7)

(Dr. Robinson, from Page 6)

### Obituary of Dr. Robinson

Just a year after Mr. Leland and the doctor discussed all the Plans the dentist had planned for his work on fruit trees, Dr. Robinson died January 30, 1902, at his home on Summer street from "stomach trouble", said his obituary in the Piscataquis Observer, which added that he "...had been able to attend to his office business up to within a few days prior to his death...". His obituary then continued this concise summary of the first 20 years of his life: "Dr. Robinson was born in Foxcroft March 6, 1840. His father, Leonard Robinson, was a farmer and resided for many years upon the place now owned and occupied by Samuel Greeley. "Dr. Robinson received his education in the town schools and Foxcroft Academy and subsequently taught several country schools. About the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, he entered upon the work of his chosen profession and subsequently graduated from the Philadelphia Dental College. For upwards of 40 years he had practiced in the town of nativity, and has always been considered one of the most skillful practitioners in Eastern Maine." Then came great praise for his character. "He was what the world might call an honest man in the truest sense of its meaning. For many years he enjoyed an excellent practice and by rigid economy had accumulated quite a good property. The Doctor was a great reader, subscribing to a large number of papers and magazines, and few men were better informed on matters of general interest than he- He was greatly interested in gardening and especially in fruit culture and was an authority on that subject."

\*\*\*\*

#### **“Under the spreading chestnut tree, The village smithy stands”**

These are the opening lines of the well known poem “The Village Blacksmith” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, published in 1840.

Four young American chestnut trees have been planted at the Blacksmith Shop Museum on Dawes Road. Although the trees are not yet large enough to stand under, looking toward the future, a smithy will have a place to stand. Glen Rea, from the American Chestnut Tree Foundation came to the museum and, with the help of curator David Lockwood, planted the trees. These trees have the distinction of being planted the farthest north in the state of Maine and the hope is they will flourish here.

In 1900 there were over 4 billion American Chestnuts from Maine to Alabama. Shortly after, a fungus known as the chestnut blight, was introduced to America, probably on Japanese and Chinese chestnut trees. This blight killed most of our American Chestnuts.

Since 1983 the American Chestnut Foundation has been working to restore the trees. The Foundation has crossed the American chestnut with the Chinese chestnut through six generations to produce trees with all the characteristics of the American chestnut but with resistance to the blight. The Maine Chapter is currently growing 5<sup>th</sup> generation hybrids.

The trees grow to a maximum of 100 feet and can attain a diameter of 14 feet. They bloom white flowers in July and in the fall produce prickly round burs which contain three edible chestnut-colored seeds. These nuts are sweet, highly nutritious and gluten-free. They are a source of food not only for humans, but for deer, bears, turkey and squirrels too.

A limited amount of trees are currently available to the public. For further information go to <http://www.me-acf.org> or contact [Mainetacf@gmail.com](mailto:Mainetacf@gmail.com) or call Glen Rea at 207-945-6945.”

## The Dunham Forge



Byron Aubrey talks with Andy MacDougall (Dave Lockwood in the foreground)

We opened our summer's activities on July 4<sup>th</sup> with the grand opening of Dunham Forge. Thanks goes out to Dave Lockwood who did all the hard work in lining up donations to help with the building project. It's a wonderful building and should be useful for many years to come. Dave also scheduled all of the blacksmiths who came to demonstrate their craft. A special thanks goes out to – John Calderwood from Etna, Pete Polichak from Dexter, Byron Aubrey from Kanduskeag, Matt Griffith from Guilford, Dwight King from Orrington and Pat Roy from Belfast. These blacksmiths gave their time and talents to make blacksmithing come alive for many folks this summer. For each visiting blacksmith, Dave Lockwood made a wonderful wooden sign with their name inscribed on it. The smithy was given the sign. Most Saturdays we had an excellent attendance, selling many hats and ornaments and gaining several new members. The venture was very successful.

The demonstrations will continue through September, and hopefully our members can come to check it out. We then close the forge for the season – the blacksmith shop itself will be open until snow flies!

# 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     | \$ _____ |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b> | \$ _____ |

*(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 \_\_\_\_\_

*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.*

## Annual Dues

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2014. 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 *Conservator*.

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### 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.

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Planting the Chestnut Trees

(Left, Glen Rea, Right, Dave Lockwood)

### Message from Mary

Our Fall issue already! Where did the summer disappear to? It was a busy one with the Observer Building open on Thursdays and the Blacksmith Shop demonstrations most Saturdays. Our July 4<sup>th</sup> 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party went off well in spite of the drizzly day. We had many come and enjoy a piece of cake and the grand opening of the Dunham Forge.

We now start to slow down a little. We'll continue to be at the Observer Building on Thursdays, cataloging. We have one more meeting on October 1, when Carlson Williams will share the wonderful photo collection donated by Elaine Hall. The Blacksmith Shop will also host blacksmiths through the end of September. The autumn is my favorite time of year, I hope you enjoy it too!

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#### 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!

Ellen Anderson, D.P.M.

Family Eyecare

Green Door Gallery

Lary Funeral Home

Maine Highlands Federal C/U

Mallett Real Estate

Pleasant River Lumber

Rowell's Garage

Steinke and Caruso

Mark Stitham, M. D

Sean Stitham, M.D.

#### Items Available

We thank Bob's Home and Garden on Lincoln Street for stocking our ornaments and DVD's. Please stop by their store and support this local business.

Glass Christmas ornaments: \$6.00 each (add \$4.00 for shipping)

2008 – Blacksmith Shop

2009 – Observer Building

2010 – Central Hall

2011 – Thompson Free Library

2012 – Foxcroft Academy

2013 – The Blethen House

2014 – Pleasant Street School

DVD's :

Glimpses of Dover and Foxcroft - \$10.00 (add \$3.00 for shipping)

Memories of Central Hall/Lou Stevens - \$15.00 (add \$3.00 for shipping)

Dover-Foxcroft throws: \$40.00 (add \$8.00 for shipping)

#### Work Day at the Historical Society

Thursdays are almost always work days 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.

**Thank you all!**

**The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.**  
**28 Orchard Road**  
**Dover-Foxcroft, ME**  
**04426-3706**

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**Blethen Brothers Garage, behind the Methodist Church  
(Central Hall in the Background)**