



The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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The Water Trough

By

Mary Annis



The Water Trough Rediscovered - 1988

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“Watering trough”, a man made or natural receptacle intended to provide drinking water to animals. Troughs were common in towns and cities in early history and were used as a way to water teams of horses or oxen, and to water cattle and sheep as they were herded through town. Foxcroft had a watering trough situated at the intersection of North and Main Streets, now known as Monument Square. There was also a granite tub located on Merrick Square. On many streets, there were wooden watering tubs placed about a mile apart along the roadways. Water flowed to tubs through lead pipes that were connected to nearby springs. The animals were well cared for in the early days.

Piscataquis Observer Editor, Liston Evans, had a caring heart. He wanted to see horses and dogs treated with kindness and consideration, being the owner of these animals himself. In July of 1901, he started his successful campaign in print to provide water for the animals. In an editorial called “A Public Need,” he wrote,

“During one of the extremely hot days of June we saw a dog trotting through Monument Square and his tongue hanging out as if he wanted a drink of water, but we could not think of a place in Foxcroft where he could get a drink nor where a traveler could water his horse. The pump in Merrick Square makes it a little better for the horse, but the dog stands a poor chance.”

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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 207-717-2666

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By Fred Washburn

Black Marauder

Black as the night and sly as the foxes,
Swift in his flight as he follows the row,
This flying highwayman, old Jimmy the crow.

Days without end I have tried to outsmart him,
Trying 'most everything under the sun –
Lying all day with hope to ensnare him,
Blazing away with my old double gun.

I remember one fellow, the king of all crow land;
When I would endeavor to give him the gaff,
His life seemed enchanted, I touched not a feather
As he flew away with his bold, raucous laugh.

To all the bold hunters who follow the trail
To bag for themselves a buck or a doe,
If you think that a deer is a test in outsmarting,
Just try your luck once in outsmarting a crow!



I never Was There

A town without a church for all its people,
That never sounded chime of evening bell,
Was never one in which the Lord was living,
But rather where the evil spirits dwell.

Laughter and Tears, 1951

Jan. 7th, 1878.

A word to the wise is sufficient; but the other man passeth on and is punished.

Settle Your Bill

—WITH—

C. C. Titcomb,
Within Twenty days from date.
I mean what I say
Everything in a first class store can be found at C. C. TITCOMB'S, cheap for cash or ready pay.
Hats, Caps, Boots & Shoes
at hard times prices.
☞ Don't ask for any more credit. ☞

The Water Trough (continued from page 1)



Clare Gray Watering his cows in Monument Square

“A Dexter man hit the fountain in Monument Square Saturday, knocking it off its base and breaking it. The water flew in all directions and the square was quite busy for a few moments.”

He went on to say that a public watering trough was also needed in Monument Square, high enough for horses and low enough for dogs, because this was “common humanity”, and, in hopes of getting something done, he added, “We would respectfully refer the matter to the ladies who are so instrumental in bringing about so many of our public improvements.”

Several years later, as the horse was being replaced by the automobile, the Monument Square watering trough made headlines again –

Old timers remember the large cast iron trough. Peter Dyer remembered in an interview in 1985 driving his father’s team into town from Atkinson. The wagon was loaded with logs destined for Merrill’s Mill on Cherry Street. He would stop at the trough and let the animals drink their fill. Dot Gray spoke about her father driving cattle out to Gray Valley and letting the animals refresh themselves at the trough. Adelard “Shorty” Long remembered the night the Opera House caught fire. He was a member of the fire department at the time. He said the old trough was a busy place that night!

The trough proudly stood for many decades until 1933. That was when they paved North and Main Streets. According to George Dunham, the fountain showed up in photos taken of the old Opera House block around 1904, but was not present in photos taken earlier. The fountain, which sat on a pedestal and had a smaller basin at the foot where dogs could drink, was moved when the road was rebuilt. What should the town do with the watering trough? It was given to Carroll Wiles, who moved it to the backyard of his home on Park Street where it was used as a fish pond in his rock garden. Over the years, as leaves and dirt built up and the property changed hands several times, the trough passed from sight as well as memory.

In 1985, George Dunham, president of the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, began to wonder if the trough was still on Park Street. He and a few others approached owners of the property, Mr. and Mrs. Terrence McGill. They agreed to give the trough back to the town if someone could be found to dig it up and reseed their lawn. Selectboard member, Ted Magee, presented the offer to the board. Town manager, Owen Pratt, suggested a civic group step forward, and the town would decide where the trough would be displayed.

Recovery efforts began in the spring of 1985, when John Paul Ross, a member of Boy Scout Troop 100, stepped forward and offered to dig up the trough as his Eagle Scout project. The town of Dover-Foxcroft helped John with his efforts. Public works employee, Albert Sands, who is also a metal finder, went over the area with a metal detector and marked the spot where he believed the trough was buried. However, an abundance of poison ivy covered the site during the summer, so the trough remained buried for another season.

(Continued on page 4)

(The Watering Trough – from Page 3)



On a very cold, rainy Saturday in October, John Ross and fellow scouts Robert Crockett, Cam Brawn, Matthew Curtis and Roy Crockett dug until they struck metal, then carefully cleared away the dirt, exposing the rim of the trough. Selectman Eric Annis, using a backhoe, helped clear the area and lift the large, heavy tub from its burial site. Although the scouts continued to dig, the base and fountain that once adorned the circular tub were not found.



Then Bob Shapleigh came on the scene. Bob was a metalsmith, specializing in repair of antique metal items from suits of armor to lamps. Shapleigh hauled the tub to his shop on the Milo Road. Using bits of scrap metal, including a truck wheel rim and pieces of pipe, he designed and built a new pedestal to match the original.

The trough is now located a short distance away from its former site. It's placed on a grassy area in front of the Congregational Church, behind the Civil War monument. It sits on what used to be the front lawn of Foxcroft Academy before the new Academy was built. Tradition links the old trough and the academy as freshmen boys were officially initiated by a thorough dunking in the cold water flowing from the tub's fountain.

The old watering trough still sits on its base in front of the church. Each summer it sports a lovely display of petunias provided by the ladies of the Congregational Church and the town of Dover-Foxcroft. We certainly thank all those folks who brought the old trough back to town in 1985.

Clarence Blethen
Dover-Foxcroft's only Major League Baseball Player
By Lou Stevens

The first mention of the prowess of Clarence Blethen as an athlete at Foxcroft Academy was this short comment in the Piscataquis Observer in 1912: "Pitching for the Academy was Clarence Blethen who easily won his next two games, 6-0 over Dexter with the losers getting two hits, and 4-2 over HCI [note: at that time that was the initial of Higgins Classical Institute, a prep school in Charleston] when he struck out 13." He was about 18 when he pitched for FA.

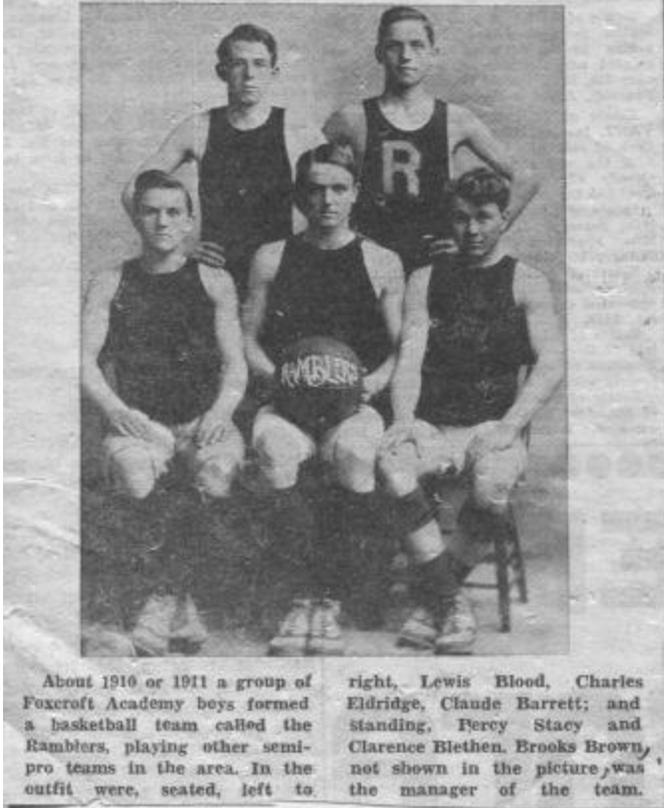
His baseball career, not at the Academy, would, however, continue for about 60 years as we shall see later. An interesting fact that really has little, if anything, to do with Clarence except to mention that the enrollment for the fall term at FA in 1913 was 145. It should be pointed out that the school year at that time was composed of three terms, fall, winter, and spring with students being able to enroll in whichever they could.

Long after I learned about his being at FA, I read that he was the only major league player born in either Dover, Foxcroft, or Dover-Foxcroft. His family were residents then of Foxcroft, but not related, evidently, to the hotel Blethen family in Dover. His obituary in the Observer told us he had passed away in 1973, some 60 years since he pitched at FA.

There was no portrait with his obituary, and no action photo showing him completing a pitch to show his form on the mound which made me all the more curious about his style of delivery (right or lefty).

(Continued on Page 6)

Clarence Blethen
Dover-Foxcroft's only Big League Baseball Player
By Lou Stevens



Clarence Blethen, standing, on the right

I learned no more info about Clarence for many years until Ric Hoffman, who shoed horses in this area, mentioned going to Frederick, Maryland. Surprise! So I asked him if he had ever heard of Clarence who pitched for Frederick. Of course he did, as Clarence was his Little League coach for a few years. He showed me one of the bulletins with several team pictures with Ric. Unfortunately, the photo was not clear enough to reprint.

Surely, coaching youngsters was much more pleasurable, rewarding, and worthwhile to see some his students thrive in baseball than happened to him in the majors.

Then came his obituary in the *Piscataquis Observer* saying he had died.

I knew I'd find more facts about Clarence's career in my copy of "The Baseball Encyclopedia" which has stats of organized baseball from 1871 and being in my edition with modern players last careers were in mid 1975. I found Clarence in the section on "Pitcher Register" on page 1588. This is not a light book to carry around! Two short lines in small type say: "Blethen, Clarence, Waldo (Climax)" and " B. June 11, 1893, Dover-Foxcroft, Me. D.Apr. 11, 1973, Frederick, Md. BL [batted left] TR (throws right)" 165 lbs.

Note: It is interesting to notice that the weight of most of the other pitchers on the two pages are nearer to 200 lbs. than Clarence, who, in the photo does appear somewhat slender in the one arm seen clearly.

(Continued on Page 7)

(Clarence Blethen, continued from page 6)

Fate certainly chose two of the teams that signed Clarence to be those with the poorest two records in his future. First came the Boston Red Sox who finished last in the American League with a team that won just 60 games while losing 91. In 1923, while in New York, Babe Ruth, a former Sox hitter and pitcher helped the Yankees win the pennant and World Series. Six years passed before Clarence was back in the majors, and unfortunately with another loser, the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1929, when their record for sixth place was 70 wins but 83 losses. Blethen neither won nor lost a game with 5 being for the Sox and but 2 for Dodgers. He would still be involved with baseball, but not in the major leagues.



The Class of 1911 of Foxcroft Academy chose a dramatized version of Hiawatha as its annual Senior play. Principals in the cast: seated, Clarence

Blethen, Alice Packard, Harley Williams; standing, Albert Harvey, Thomas Reynolds Jr., Edna Oakes. This picture was taken by Sumner J. Chase.

From the *Observer*, June 4, 1914
Mayo's Mill is sold to American Woolen



**American Woolen Co. Buys the
Mayo & Son Co. Mills.**

Announcement was made last week by the Mayo & Son Co. of the purchase of the Foxcroft Mills by the American Woolen Co. The following statement was given out for publication: "In order to protect the water power of the Brown Mills the American Woolen Co. has made arrangements to purchase the Foxcroft Woolen Mills at Foxcroft. A member of the executive committee of the woolen company states that the purchase is for the conservation of the water power and not to increase the loomage of the company which is sufficient for present purposes and indeed, under the existing conditions of business, is not all in operation.

Between the closing of the mills Saturday and starting Monday morning account of stock will be taken and the American Woolen Co. takes possession Monday.

George E. Mayo, superintendent for Mayo & Son Co., was called to Boston Monday on business and word has since been received that he has accepted the position of resident agent of the Foxcroft Mills for the American Woolen Co. The new company has also secured the services of Miss Bertha Barbour as stenographer.

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 _____

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 2015. 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*.

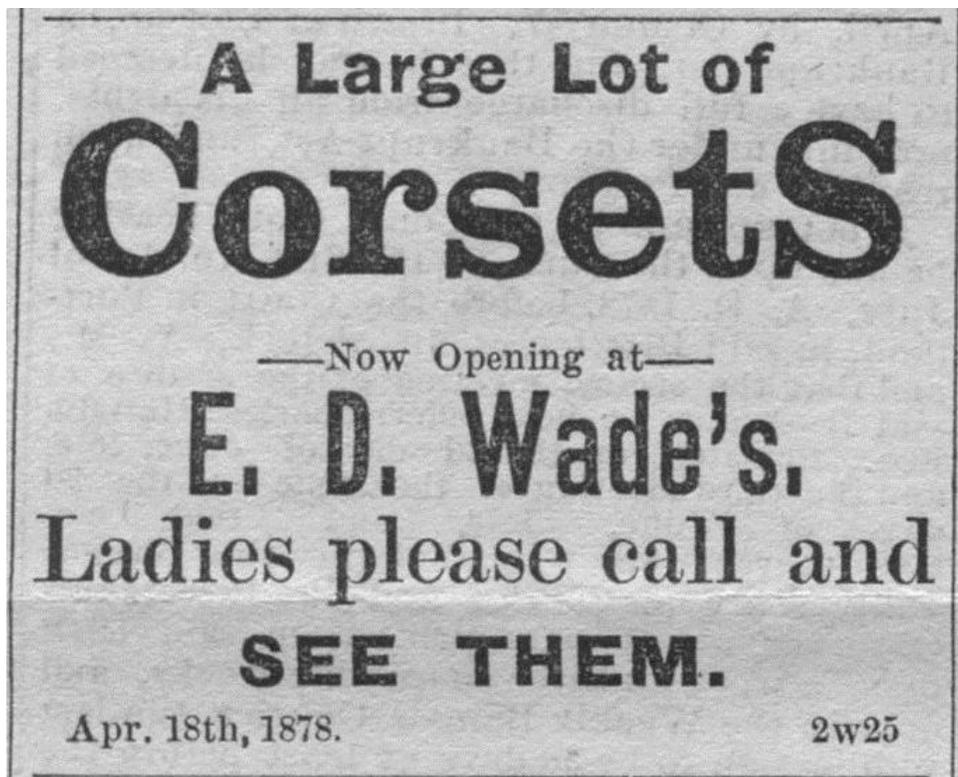
The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society – Membership Application Form

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.



(At that time E.D. Wade's store was in the 'Hopkins Block' on Union Square (the little red brick building next to the Masonic Temple)

Message from Mary

We are now “winding down” after a very busy summer. The Observer Building Museum had many visitors from several states – some with ties to our town and lots of folks here on vacation. The comments were very flattering.

The Blacksmith Shop is still open through October. We were busy most Saturdays as various area blacksmiths came to work at the Dunham Forge. Those demonstrations attracted many and will continue on September 12 and 19.

I send a huge thank you to all who hosted at the Observer Building and to those who helped at the Dunham Forge. We appreciate you volunteering – without you we could not do what we do!

Fall is soon upon us. It’s a beautiful time of year – Enjoy!

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.

Thank you all!

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
- 2015 – Mayo’s Mill

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.

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

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ME.



The Dover-Foxcroft Baseball Team, 1910
(Clarence Blethen Top Center?)