



The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society
Volume 18, Number 4 Winter 2015

School Days

Lou Stevens



Louis Stevens

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Our local historian and good friend Lou Stevens has agreed to share his memories of school days in Dover-Foxcroft. He began his studies at the one room Bear Hill school. In the middle of the first grade he moved with his family “to town”. There he attended Pleasant Street school, then the intermediate (Grammer) school on Mayo Street and finally the old Foxcroft Academy. I am sure that those of you who remember your days in those schools will appreciate Lou’s memories. Perhaps you will share some of your own?

Bear Hill School

My educational career did not start at a day-care center (not known at that time) and not at a K-8 building as could happen today; or parents turning a room into a typical classroom for home schooling. Instead it started with my grandmother (Mabel Stevens) and her four teenage girls (my aunts, of course) at the kitchen table, plus occasional botany classes while strolling through nearby woods and being told of names of the many flowers there; and watching how various animals lived; seeing how my father would drive harness horses at Exeter and Skowhegan fairs; ranch-raised black foxes by grampy and father; and hound dogs an uncle used. Gym classes of myself and girl cousins went this way: learning how to stay at float at the swimming hole by the nearby Pine Grove cemetery; playing baseball on the spacious lawn of my aunt Lucy; skating on a small wild cranberry bog at another aunt's. Basketball hoops for outside had not come into being yet.

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The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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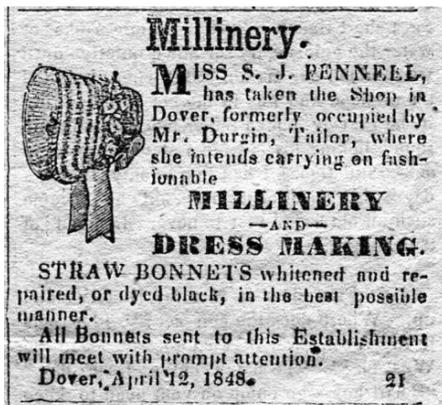
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Visit us on-line at
www.dover-foxcroft-historical-society.org
 and on Facebook

A Plea

Dave Lockwood, the keeper of the Blacksmith Shop has a project underway that uses 55 gallon drums. He has all the drums he needs, but he could really use some metal lids for them. If you have some to spare, could you give Dave a call here in Dover-Foxcroft?



Afternoon at the new Center Theatre in 1940 By Lou Stevens

A perfect time to see a Terry-Tune cartoon
 On a rainy Sunday afternoon.
 At the new theater with its velvet drapes,
 And Gene and Roy riding the western landscapes.
 A preview shaving Esther swimming in her pool.
 And Chan calling his son a fool!
 Sonja Heinie doing pirouettes on the ice;
 And laugh at Baby Snoocks played by Fannie Brice!
 A news reel shows Joe Louis keeping his crown!
 And sports fans cheer him though he is brown!
 Bing, Bob, and Dorothy are on a road to Rio;
 And Gary Cooper as Sgt. York, our WW1 hero.
 A young actor as Gipper, his name Reagan.
 And Lorre, Cagney, Robinson all with a gun.
 All the ladies pant when they see Errol Flynn.
 And kids love the dogs Asta, Lassie, and Rin-Tin-tin.
 And seven dwarfs sing "Hi ho" when off to work they go:
 As they have a new housekeeper whose first name is Snow.

Friendship.

Hew oft the burdened heart would sink In fathomless despair,
 But for an angel on the brink,
 In mercy standing there;
 An angel bright with heavenly light,
 And born of loftiest skies
 Who shows her face to mortal race,
 In friendship's holy guise.

Upon the brink of dark despair,
 With smiling face she stands;
 And to the victim shrinking there
 Outspreads her eager hands;
 In accents low, that sweetly flow
 To his awakened ear,
 She lures him back—his deathward track—
 To wards. Hope's effulgent sphere.

Sweet Friendship! let me daily give
 Thanks to my God for thee!
 Without thy smiles 'twere death to live,
 And joy to cease to be.
 Oh, bitterest drop in woe's full cup—
 To have no friend in need!
 To struggle on with grief alone,
 Were agony indeed.
 (From the *Piscataquis Observer*, April, 1852)

(School Days, continued from page 1)



Whenever I've mentioned that I was the only grandchild for four years, folks often said, "You must have been spoiled rotten", I proudly said that if learning all I did (such as singing the alphabet so to know it, print my name, know the numbers, and learning the simple songs that my aunts sung to get me asleep when rocking me, and, very important, how to tie the laces of my red moccasins I had received at Christmas. I've always felt all these bits of learning was a great introduction to my early student

The Bear Hill School

days at the one-room school at Bear Hill, and not spoiling my latter days at Pleasant Street and Grammar School and Foxcroft and even college years.

It was only a few months after my sixth birthday that I started the sub-primary (as Kindergarten was called then). I often heard from my father and aunts how they had to walk both out and back to their one-room school at the Mills (one mile each way) no matter what the weather as there was no bus then (about the 1920s) of course, on the unplowed roads. But how, about 1936, for me to travel the two-mile distance to Bear Hill, Clyde Judkins had a van with huge planks on the sides for seats for kids. Joyce French, who lived just down the road, rode too, and then we picked up others at the Mills. The trip home was in reverse. This was my schedule until I left in the middle of the first grade when I moved into town. Joyce remained at home, and we would not be reunited until our freshman year at Foxcroft Academy about 7 years later.

The Bear Hill school was very similar, of course, to many other such places. There the usual two front doors (one for each group of boys and girls. Inside, the typical large wood-burning stove, and nearby there were lots of hooks and hangers for winter clothes after getting snow covered outside during recess and lunch time. Lots of desks that could hold, if needed enough for 9 classes; slate blackboards' to write long division math problems which made me wonder if I could ever learn. REST ROOMS were at the end of a corridor. No kitchen for lunch and no room for gym classes (how could we know we would not have cafeterias or gym the rest of our school throughout our elementary schooling.

Joyce and I did not have any older brothers or sisters at this time in the school and never would. An older sister of Joyce, nicknamed Betty, was in town for school then. So, the older students—say 6th, 7th, and 8th graders adopted us, so to speak, and at recesses, they were the most helpful in the winter time by settling us into our heavy gear for playing in the snow before the snow had been packed down on the hill road for sled to use. Old kids could toss snowballs, of course, and we small students could flop in the new snow and thrash our arms around as if we were strange birds wearing home-knit mittens, boots of some sort, and hats that easily covered our ears that surely were very susceptible to winter temps.

(Continued on page 4)

(School Days, Bear Hill School – from Page 3)

Inside the school there surely was quite an excellent, though plain, heating system of a big stove that burned chunks so heavy that the older boys fed the fire all day and perhaps had been the ones to start it in the morning as Ralph lived next door. Our heavy jackets were removed and hung near the stove to dry them, along with caps, mittens, and hats, many of which had been made at home for birthday and Christmas presents. The wooden floor soon had puddles from the snow that had melted off our boots. They usually had a goodly amount tracked inside.

Of Course, we had no cafeteria at lunch time. Some of the kids, such as the Cochranes who lived next door, could hurry home for food, but for others, we took our food sometimes in those metal lard pails that quite frequently the cooks at home had used much lard in those days. I recall several times having some hot chocolate, but I don't recall where it came, but it was certainly most welcome. I do remember that it was during my 8th grade at the Grammar School that we had our first hot lunch served at the grange on Grange street. I don't recall that the expression 'brown bag it' had come into use. Of course, we hungry kids, as kids always have done it seems, also looked at what others were eating, sometimes with looks of great envy! We certainly had no thought of food fights in those days.

Back to school work. There was a lot of arithimatic (as we seemed to call math then) so usually the older students did much work at the blackboards as I recall the slate was always called then. I should be remiss if I did not tell you that the rest room was inside, down a short corridor by the area where the wood was located. Afternoon recess was similar to the morning one. And so went day by day, all without laptops, videos, copiers, and ball point pens – all waiting to be invented.

First Grade – Pleasant Street School

Sometimes in the late 1930's here in Dover-Foxcroft, the two week school vacation came at the end of the old year and start of the new year, both Christmas and January 1st came together. So now, in my memories, I'm standing in the first grade room on the western side of "now-gone" Pleasant Street school, built in 1882 and tom down in 1976, which had occupied the space for the lower grades and for 10 years the home of Dover High School before it was closed in 1904 so the 39 students were enrolled at Foxcroft Academy.

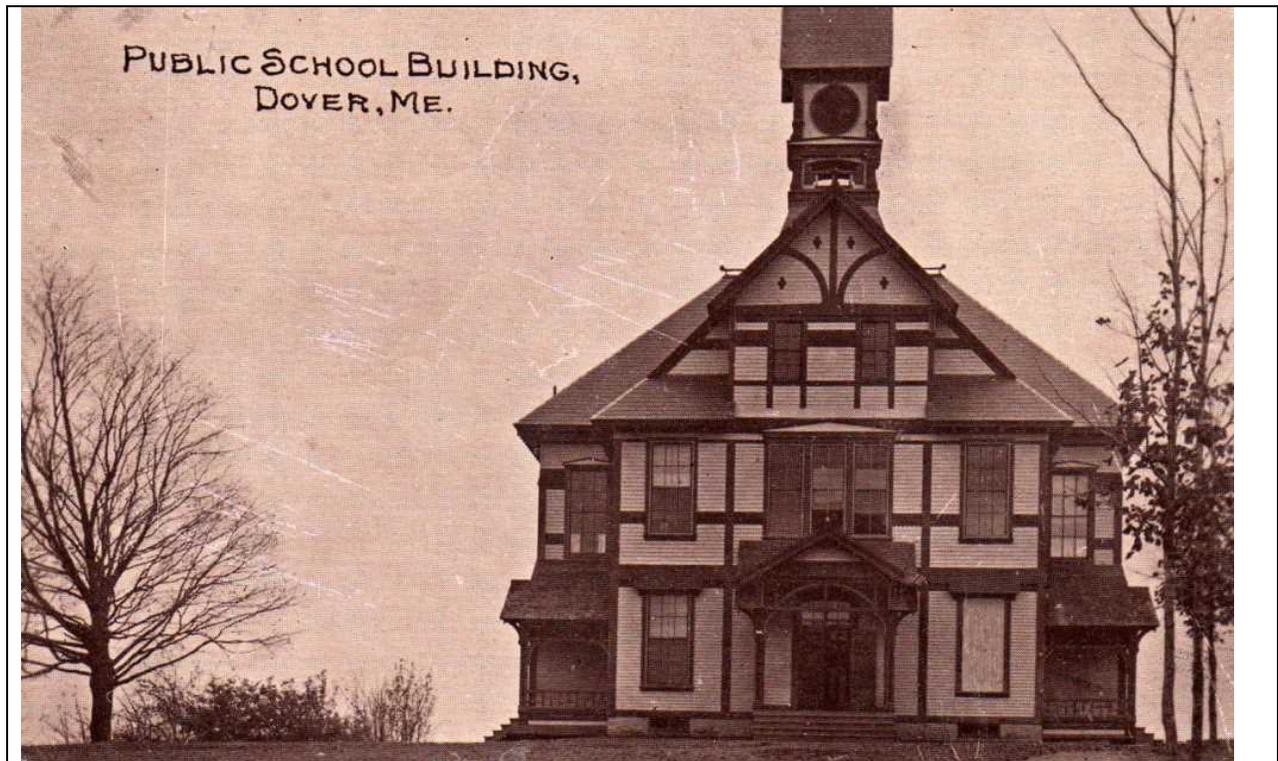
Right now, in my mind, I'm standing in the first grade in 1937 with my right hand being tightly held by my stepmother Kathryn, not because I've threatened to run back to the Bear Hill school if she let go, but with more assurance that all is okay, that I've been registered in the local school system as a first grader; and now I'm meeting my teacher, a Miss Meserau, who is introducing her class to me one by one because it is the first time we have faced each other. Folks told me that eventually we would all be graduating in the senior class at Foxcroft in a dozen years - totally incomprehensible to me, though in a few years my four aunts and their friend Kathryn would be receiving diplomas.

Little could I see that some of the kids would later help clear away the fog of puzzlement in Calculus plus the excellent instruction of Miss Ebberson at the black board; others would help me finally understand the subjunctive tense in Latin or reciting irregular French verbs.

(Continued on Page 5)

(School Days – 1st Grade, Continued from Page 4)

And getting the great answer of "YES" from coach Everett Fairbrother if I could be a baseball manager next spring, my junior year. This would eventually lead to my election into the Sports Hall of Fame at Foxcroft thanks to my many managerial chores ahead, and then sports writing. My FA ring is, of course, a treasure to me. How many times would I write their names in scorebooks at Central Hall, Oakes Field, and grandstand at fair grounds.



Second Grade – Pleasant Street School

*"By the shore of Gitche Guirmee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water..."*

Whenever I hear or read those few lines, my mind quickly puts myself back nearly 75 years ago to be in the second grade at the Pleasant Street school where we eager students are gathered in a semi-circle around the teacher, Mrs. Blood (Ola), she too is sitting in a low chair similar to those of her students.

She will entertain us each morning as she vividly reads to us the life of Hiawatha. I always look back in enjoyment to have teachers who read to us in the classroom. It would always get the day started off well, and close the day in a "frosting on the cake" niceness that sent us out the door in a feeling of "good day" when we were asked at home (at least at mine) how our day had gone.

(Continued on Page 6)

(2nd grade, Continued from Page 5)

The second grade room was located on the eastern side of the school on the first floor so we were often beneficiaries of the helpful warmth of any sun in the winter.

There was very little, if any, difference between Pleasant Street school and its twin, we could say, and North Street school. We had no hot lunches from cafeterias, no gyms for exercise classes, coal-burning furnaces furnishing heat for the radiators that were generally strong enough to dry our winter clothes when we arrived after walking to school on a stormy snowy day, or when we came in from recess.



Pleasant Street School Classroom (about 1923)

Of course, there were no modern technical gadgets that help students of today get through classes, but we survived because what we did not have, no other students of that time did either. But we did have excellent slate blackboards (as we called them) which meant keeping the erasers clean.

If the weather was warm enough to have a window open enough, the erasers could be cleaned by being clapped together, which was, as I recall, an honor to be chosen by the teacher to perform.

Our activities during the recesses depended greatly upon the weather: pouring rain (stay inside and probably the same in the winter if heavy wet snow was falling with a strong wind but, if perfect times in the spring and fall, girls liked to play hopscotch which was a very confusing game to me.

Skip ropes were fun and sometimes you could be invited to jump in hurriedly if agile enough (I wasn't) and once the mud was gone, a heel could dig a spot in the ground for the pot into which players used the fingers next to one's thumbs to put their marbles (or what we called more common as "glassies"). I've seen bags of them still being sold, so maybe the game is still popular, if money could be involved somehow.

Many years later when I was writing a history of Foxcroft Academy football, I read that the team played at Doore field in the early 1900s. Where was that as no precise location was given. I would learn that Doore field was this large area (where we played cowboys) was named after George Door who had several sons who playing on the football teams for a few years.

(Continued on Page 7)

(2nd Grade, continued from page 6)

Back to Mrs. Blood who was, I would learn later, a married teacher, and that she was also a mother—not that that mattered!—and that she had had two students in schools, though not at Pleasant Street. Her son Harold was graduated from the Academy in 1937, and his sister in 1940. I don't recall ever seeing them come to their mother's classroom, which would have attracted attention, I'm sure.

Since we had no gym in the building, our exercises, for some, occurred at the morning recess. Few exercises were done after we got to school by walking. Buses for the out-of-town kids were just starting as I recall. So, what did we do to be active at recess? Girls drew diagrams with chalk, as I recall, on the rocks next to the school in a game called hopscotch, and now very complicated all these years afterwards to give a talk on how it was performed, except it was done, wasn't it, on one leg? Other girls played jump rope – usually just for them, while we boys played cowboys and Indians (all very imaginary) with our pistols being how we held a thumb up for the handle, and a finger pointed out with a yell 'Gotcha") all in the nearby field where the future Mayo school would be built after the war. The bell rang and a rush inside where it was warm, and heavy jackets put on hooks to dry.

We were outside after our home-made lunch which was brought in a colorful lard pail. I recall one time we had small bottles of milk to drink in the morning. How quickly that entered our shrinking stomachs after so much of outside playing. That milk tidied us over until lunch under teacher observance.

Suddenly, the year was over, Hiawatha vanished into the sunlight, and now our class would now travel upstairs for the first time, to enter the third grade by a different entrance as I recall.



Third Grade – Pleasant Street School

It's early September in the fall of 1939 and I am with a group of interested students, including myself, who were members of the second year class the previous year (and who adopted each other back in the first grade on the bottom floor). We are now on the way to higher education – you might and could say! – as we tromped up the stairs to have another new teacher – the third in three years. She is Miss Pratt who will make the year very interesting with many spelling tests, not on paper but spelled out in voices as we stand in a row in spelling bees. A big difference in not knowing publicly whether it's 'licence' or "license" than writing your opinion on paper.

By the way, I could not find the exact year when the two-story section for what then was called the 'sub-primary' (Kindergarten) on ground level and the stairs to the second floor that occasionally got sun from the East in the morning and from the West in the afternoon.

Miss Pratt early handed out to us a wonderful music book with songs of various peoples – such as Spanish, which we learned, not just for the foreign words but for the beat that could tell us why it was Spanish. This was something that stayed in my mind for the rest of my life.

I do not recall that she read to us or whether we all read together like a chorus or choir in a church. Whatever! I've always remembered that year with pleasure. Outside at recess, it was the same amusements as the first and second grades already mentioned. No gym, no cafeteria at noon, no ball point pens, which would be the case in the next two classes awaiting us in the building. Note that I did not say they were hardships because we did not possess them, but again, no other students in the two schools, North Street and Pleasant Street, had them either.

Francis (Frank) Sanger Douty

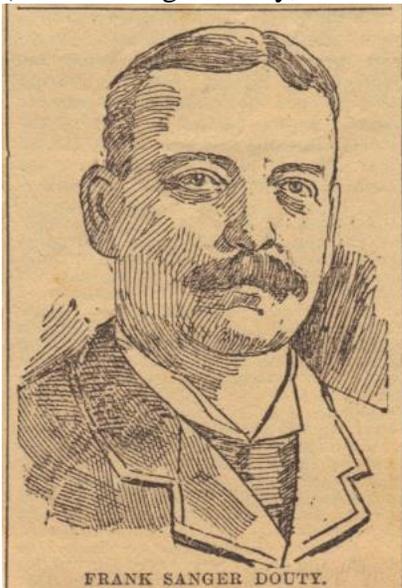
(1847-1900)

By Mary Annis

Most of us in our historical society have heard the name Calvin Sanger Douty. Colonel Douty enlisted in the First Maine Cavalry on November 7, 1861 and was killed leading his troops into battle at the battle of Aldie, Virginia on June 17, 1863. His body was returned to Dover and at his funeral on June 27, 1863, bells were tolled at sunrise, noon and sunset, all businesses were closed from 1 to 5. After the service held at his home, his body was taken by two black horses to his grave in the Dover Cemetery (lot 110). After hymns, prayers and speakers, he was laid to rest. The *Observer* reports, "The grave was beautifully decorated with evergreens and flowers and the coffin was draped in the national flag". In 1866, after the war was over, veterans named the GAR post in his honor.

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(Francis Sanger Douty, Continued from Page 8)



Colonel Douty fathered several children, however Francis (Frank) Sanger Douty was the only child to live to adulthood. Frank was born on September 8, 1847 in Guilford, the second of seven children born to Colonel Douty and his wife Emily. He lived in Guilford until the family moved to Dover sometime between 1850 and 1860.

His obituary was given to us recently by the Brownville Historical Society. Somehow they had it in their collection and after reading it, I thought it was worth sharing. So many times we are aware of the people in our town who make their mark, but we know so little about their children. Frank had an interesting life, and although he moved “away” and died in California, he thought enough of his hometown to be brought back here for eternal rest. His obituary appeared in the *Bangor Daily News* on April 27, 1900.

“Frank Sanger Douty, formerly well known as a resident of eastern Maine and as a native of Dover; and as a member of the famous First Maine Cavalry in the

Civil war, is dead in San Francisco, where he has been undergoing treatment in a hospital. The San Francisco Bulletin of April 11 has the following of interest to Mr. Douty’s many Bangor acquaintances:

Frank S. Douty died at 3:30 this morning at the Homoepathic hospital. His death was unexpected for though he had been ill since the latter part of last October, with Bright’s disease, the later accounts of his condition were an augury for his restoration to health. The final cause of death was owing to enlargement of the heart. Last week he was removed from his beautiful home in San Mateo and taken to the hospital.

Frank Sanger Douty will be universally mourned. He was a good friend, a faithful official, and throughout his long career with the Pacific Improvement company, where he had dealings with men of all sorts and conditions of life, there was not one among them, from the ostlers at Del Monte to the railroad magnates that had not a good word for Frank Douty.

He was born in Dover, Piscataquis county, Me., on Sept. 8, 1847. His father was Calvin Sanger Douty, who commanded the First Maine cavalry, one of the best volunteer regiments that fought through the Civil war. It was his fate to die the death of a soldier and he was shot while leading a charge at the battle of Aldie, in June, 1863.

Frank Douty had a martial spirit and at the age of 13 joined his father as orderly. Douty had often been under fire, and when he was in a reminiscent mood would often speak of his young soldier days.

After his father’s death he received an appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. But the boy who had been a soldier had been treated as a man, and had done man’s work found the life at the schools irksome and resigning from there sought and obtained employment as a civil engineer upon Maine railroads.

Again the spirit of adventure came upon the land and joining a Government surveying party he came west. He traveled much through New Mexico, Arizona and Utah, sometimes as a surveyor and again as a solitary prospector. One time Mr. Douty was in Salt Lake. Suddenly, he said, a great desire to see his old home came upon him. He was a man of sudden impulses and though of late years he had thought little of his New England home, the wish to return was so strong that he packed up and went east.

In 1874 he came to California and through his cousin, General D. D. Colton, he went into the service of the railroad. A year afterward he became secretary and treasurer of the Western Development company. In 1874 the Pacific Improvement company was incorporated and Mr. Douty became its first secretary and treasurer.

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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.

(Francis Douty, Continued from page 9)

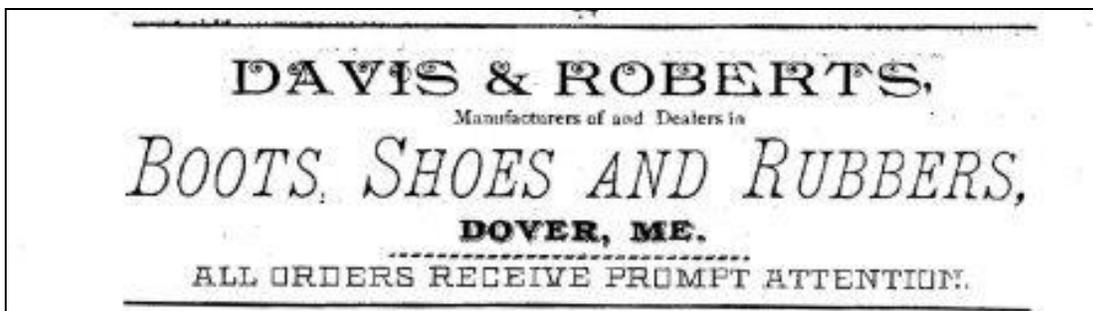
Mr. Douty held various offices under the owners of the railroad and Pacific Improvement company, so many indeed that during the investigation of the Pacific Railway commission one of the members, Mr. Anderson of New York, referred to him as the "Foo Bah of the Southern Pacific". At the time of his death he was president of the Oakland Railroad company, secretary and treasurer of the Pacific Improvement company, secretary and treasurer of the Carbon Hill and Rocky Mountain Coal company, secretary and treasurer of the Southern Pacific Railroad of New Mexico and Arizona, secretary and treasurer of the Capay Valley Land company and an officer in a host of minor companies.

He was a member of the Pacific-Union club, University club, Bohemian club, Burlington club, San Mateo Hunt club and the San Francisco Club.

Some five years ago Mr. Douty built a beautiful house of the Spanish style of architecture in San Mateo, and was one of the first to induce people to settle there.

Mr. Douty leaves a widow, but no children. (His wife was Annie V. Bishop)

It is understood that his remains will be cremated."



Message from Mary

Here we are at the close of another year. This is our “down time” at the Society. It’s the time we catch our breath – get caught up with our cataloging and filing and get set for another year. We will continue to spend Thursdays at the Observer Building, come join us if you can, we can find a project for you.

We will be having a special meeting on Tuesday evening, January 12, 2016. We would like to change our annual meeting from April until June each year, and this requires a bi-law change. This will allow more members to attend and take the “fear” away of being snowed out – yes, it’s happened! If you cannot attend please feel free to voice your opinion.

I wish all our members a very merry Christmas and may your new year be extra happy!

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.
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Mallett Real Estate
Pleasant River Lumber
Rowell's Garage
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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.

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North Street School (1873- 1950's)