



# The SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society  
Volume 19, Number 4 Winter 2016

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## Louis Stevens

July 5, 1930 – October 20, 2016



Lou Stevens

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## A Tribute to Louis E. Stevens

By Mary Annis

My family used to vacation here since the 1960's visiting my in-laws and camping at Sebec Lake. This was when I first met Lou. He was a friend of my mother-in-law, Susan Annis. Every Friday, a group got together with Polly Merrill, they were known as the "Happy Hookers". They spent the afternoon, after enjoying a hearty lunch, learning how to hook rugs. Lou was very talented and enjoyed the hooking and cross stitching he did. He was proud of what he made and loved to share it.

After we moved here in 1994, the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society was revived and Lou was there to help every step of the way. We all know how much the two towns' history meant to Lou. He loved hosting at the museum, especially on the day of Homecoming when so many would come in and ask, "Is Lou here?"

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### The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

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Visit us on-line at  
[www.dover-foxcroft-historical-society.org](http://www.dover-foxcroft-historical-society.org)  
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### "They're Off!"

Lou Stevens

I lost eight races again today.  
I've used up all my take home pay.  
I'll borrow a quarter for subway fare.  
I shouldn't have bet that old grey mare.  
That photo cost me the daily double,  
My favorites get beaten and longshots run last.  
That is the story of my gambling past.  
I study the Racing Form each night  
To see if I can't pick some horses that are right.  
They're winners for sure until they know  
I bought tickets saying, WIN, PLACE and SHOW  
And then they all quit in the long home stretch  
Leaving me just another broken wretch.  
I'm going to give up this life of sorrows –  
But first let me see who's racing tomorrow



### Some Scribblings in Verse

Louis Stevens

(1965)

#### What Young Boys are made of

I won't obey my pa,  
Or listen to my ma,  
I wear tight pants,  
Twist when I dance  
I drink a six pack,  
Like to hit the sack.  
I hot rod at night.  
My bomb is my delight.  
Love the drive in,  
Where I can sin.  
I suck on weeds,  
Have lustful needs.  
Wear ducktail hair,  
And how I can swear!  
I know 4 letter words,  
School is for the birds.  
My tires I like to squeal.  
A pizza makes a meal.  
I'm a teenage boy!

#### What Young Girls are made of

I paint my nails red.  
I won't make my bed.  
I can't get a meal.  
I go out with a heel.  
My hair I will tease.  
The boys I will please.  
A cigarette I'll take  
From one on the make.  
My stockings are lacy,  
Books I read are racy.  
I live on the phone,  
Walk the sidewalks alone.  
I wear short shorts,  
Know all the parking spots.  
Wear my boy's class ring.  
Like to hear Ringo sing.  
I'm a teenage girl!

(A Tribute to Lou Stevens, continued from page 1)



**Mary and Lou - 2015**

He also was a weekly contributor to the *Piscataquis Observer*, writing a column about history and his memories. I have saved every column I could find – they are in a binder at the museum. One in particular was a shocker. He talked about “his wife” and how he had to get rid of her. That sure grabbed my attention, not having a clue that Lou had ever been married. Upon further reading, he was speaking of his car! What a sense of humor!

As part of reviving our historical society, we began to print a quarterly newsletter, *the Shiretown Conserver*. Lou was a prolific contributor. He loved sharing his stories. He had just completed a series of articles on his school days and I could see that it was getting harder for him and he said, apologetically, that he couldn’t do the stories anymore, but two weeks before he fell ill he called me and said he had two more articles ready to go!

For many years Lou would do a program for us at our annual meeting. The topics were varied, but when the public knew Lou was speaking, the folks came in droves. He was so knowledgeable and was an excellent speaker.

For several years at our October meeting, Lou led cemetery tours. Those who came learned so much about who was buried in the cemeteries and their life stories. For two years he led bus tours, the buses were filled to capacity with history buffs.

I will miss his Thursday visits at the museum. He would arrive around 10:30 and we were treated to a wonderful time as he shared his memories. Even though he had a cane, he would climb those stairs. It made me nervous as he made his way down! I would invariably say “Lou, one step at a time!” I was so sad to see his health decline this last year.

On a personal note, one of my most treasured possessions is a Christmas card Lou sent a few years ago. In it was a note congratulating me on a story I had written for the *Conserver*. I never thought I had any writing talent, but this praise, from a man who was truly a writer, made my heart soar!

We all know how much Lou loved his town, his sports (he was so happy with the ring he received from the Academy, couldn’t wait to show it off) and Central Hall (he was the Honorary Campaign Chairman). Oh how I wanted him there to cut the ribbon when the project was completed.

We will miss him desperately. God Bless You Lou, may you, and especially your talented fingers, rest in peace.

(I shared this at Lou’s funeral service on November 1<sup>st</sup>)

## Remembering My Cousin Louis Stevens

By Ann Weston



Lou's Cousin Ann - 1973

Lou was a special cousin. He gave me much love and enjoyment in growing up with him, and through our lives together – like a brother!

When we were youngest, we would play baseball with my sister Lorraine and cousins Connie, Jenney, Rene, Shirley, Sandra, Madeline and Rosalie on the front lawn of every house in Dover South Mills, on the front lawn of my house in Dover South Mills. On the ice pond we would play ice hockey with a tennis ball and a hockey stick (no blade). We sled down Doore's long hill and maybe sometimes half way go into the ditch! Wow! Ice skating on the pond in the mills and when the ice was clear and a little wind, go like the wind! And we enjoyed bon fires keeping us warm. To my aunt DoDo's Cranberry Pond to skate on cold days. And enjoyed Thanksgiving meals with the aunties.

The swimming hole was a refreshing place on hot days to cool off with family and neighbors.

Growing up Lou's ants Lucy, Dora, Beatrice ("DoDo") and Sylvia (Tete) as Lou called them as he couldn't say their names. So we always called them DoDo and TeTe! They taught him his numbers, colors, alphabet, how to write his name and the love of flowers and nature. He spoke of that often.

His grandfather Maurice and his father, Charles, had three horses and Lou would go with them to harness races at Exeter Fair and other fairs around. So at a young age he fell in love with horses. He enjoyed going to the Skowhegan Fair and staying at our aunt Alice's home and horse racing in the afternoon and fireworks at night. I remember him talking about one hot night he was sleeping downstairs on the couch, when the gypsies came on the porch. The dog started barking and he was so scared he never slept downstairs again!



Lou, 3 years old, and the three horses

Lou talked about the one room schoolhouse at Bear Hill and how each child would bring something to make a soup for lunch, and sledding down the hill! He enjoyed Mrs. Blood the first grade teacher and Mrs. Eva Goff, fifth grade teacher with her stuffed birds in the front of her room at the old Pleasant Street School

In high school Lou took typing class his senior year from the coach's wife. He enjoyed learning the ins and outs of typing. He continued typing for sixty eight years! Writing was his passion. He wrote on his manual typewriter, and later on an electric typewriter. He owned several of them and never wanted a computer!

(Continued on Page 5)

(Remembering my cousin Lou Stevens, Cont'd from Page 4)



Lou continued to write, typing his own stories, all his life.



Lou's dad racing on the Piscataquis River in the 1930's. Lou had vivid memories of those races, and his beloved horses.

He was manager of baseball, basketball and football for all four years at Foxcroft Academy. He received three "F" certificates and a maroon sweater with the "F" on it and with three white circles on the left sleeve. He was so proud of receiving them and talked about it often. He could be seen at football games at F.A. along the sidelines taking pictures or writing for the Piscataquis Observer! He graduated from F.A. in 1949 at Central Hall. He furthered his education at Boston University in English and Journalism. He said he would on elevators, waiting on dorm tables and typing papers on weekends for classmates.

He graduated in 1953 and my mother, and aunts attended and got back in time for mine at Central Hall in 1953. Lou was so proud of his diplomas from grammar school, F.A. and College. He spent two years in the U.S. Army. [Most of his service was in New York City, on Governor's Island. He often talked about the many baseball games he attended at Yankee Stadium, Ebbets Field and the old Polo grounds. Even though he saw a lot of the Yankees, Dodgers and Giants, his favorites were the Red Sox: *editor*]. In the army he appreciated the cots he slept on as they were long enough for him. While in the army he did journalism and helped several soldiers get graduate degrees. He said he didn't mind doing pots and pans alone for K.P.! He went to Times Square one time and said "that was enough"!

Back to college he had a classmate, George, from New Jersey. He kept in contact with him and his wife Molly and their five children and grandchildren. He visited them often, going to plays and the Opera in New York.

During his summer vacations from teaching school he would travel abroad and celebrated his birthday three times in different countries – one was in Hong Kong with his classmate, his wife and their five children. The kids enjoyed when they could eat out with Lou. They would order hamburgers and hot dogs and giggle and have great fun! Lou climbed Mount Fuji. At the top he got caught in a big snow storm! He saw Queen Elizabeth race her horse. To get in he had to dress up – a suit jacket, shirt and tie!

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(Remembering my cousin Lou Stevens, Continued from Page 5)

He said what an honor it was to be inducted into the F.A. sports hall of fame in 2013. There he received his sports ring. He was so proud of the ring and showed it to everyone.

He was an excellent writer. He wrote several books! He did much of his research at the Thompson Free Library on the history of Dover and Foxcroft. Most of that research was in the afternoons with a thermos of tea and a sandwich.

Lou was a great town historian. He wrote the two definitive histories of Dover-Foxcroft as well as several other books. He wrote dozens of articles for the Historical Society's *Conservator*. He also spoke frequently at the meetings of the Historical Society. He worked at the Piscataquis Observer for twelve years – mostly writing about sports, but for a number of years he wrote interesting columns every week. He also worked for Eastern Gazette in Dexter.

During those twelve years he came home for lunch and our children, Jeff, Debbie, Linda and Julie, grew up with him. He would bounce them in the air on his hands. He took dozens of pictures of the kids doing different things – including a New Year's baby! We enjoyed getting together with families for holidays, birthdays, picnics, and working at our aunt and uncle Bridges farm doing the haying and other chores. We worked hard in those days. We enjoyed going to the swimming hole on hot days and at the public beach (his Big Rock), and Sebec Lake. We'd get brown as a nut!

At his town apartment (in the Observer Building), he could go to different places in just a minute or two. He liked that!. So much for 34 years. He had a big teddy bear he always talked to. He enjoyed his sweets any time of day – pies, ice cream, etc. He loved to tell stories or history. He'd start them off by sayin "Sit down". Lou had a good life. He did so much. He loved Shakespeare, Opera, walks, cross stitching, hooking rugs, birds and knitting stockings and, of course, the bible and prayers. He read a wide variety of books.



Lou with visitors at the Historical Society

He had a library of his own to enjoy. He read the Bangor Dailey like a book – maybe more than once. He did a family history booklet. He had many favorite memories and he was a very gifted and thoughtful person.

Many thanks, Lou, for all those good memories. We will treasure all your books, cross stitches, rugs and the stories you have given us to cherish. We are blessed to have a cousin like you, Lou. We love you and will miss you. Sharing with us your daffodils and tulips to enjoy in the springtime! You will be greatly missed by everyone. I will miss calling you on the phone morning and evening and your visits. I know you had your ups and downs, and so in writing this bringing back lots of good and happy memories of my special cousin, Lou! And I would say to you "You did well, Lou! We love you, God Bless you and Rest in peace. Amen".

Your cousin, Ann Weston

## The Final Buzzer Sounds

Lou Stevens

From "Lou Stevens Observes", *The Piscataquis Observer*, Dec 21, 1967

*For over sixty years Lou wrote stories about sports. Maybe his favorite sport to cover was basketball, at least in his reminiscences, basketball at the old Central Hall occupied a prominent place. Here are excerpts from an article that he said was one of his favorites.*

Silence and darkness surround me as I sit in the empty balcony at Central Hall on a cold Tuesday night in December. I'm here because this is where, twenty years ago in 1947, I started writing about basketball, that crazy, wonderful, nerve-wracking, impossible game that has sent me soaring into ecstatic space with so many beautiful wins, and plunging into the depths of despair and despondency with many more heartbreaking losses, so that today, after all these years and as I near my last game, I now find that I have few outside tears left for the great victories and only inside tears for the disappointing losses.

Gradually the stillness and blackness fade away and like a stage setting coming alive as the footlights strike it, so does Central Hall, as in my mind the overhead lamps suddenly burst into brilliance – no, not brilliance, for the dingy and weak lights here never possessed that – and the deserted rows of seats are jammed with screaming fans.

**....and out of a scramble of players little Barry Vigue steals the ball and starts bringing it up court and the entire Foxcroft rooting section heaves an audible sigh, for if there is one player they want to have the ball now, it's Barry, because they know that his skill and flair for the dramatic play will mean victory for the Academy, and at the buzzer he gets fouled and after the game is ended he calmly sinks two fouls to give the Ponies a win over Guilford.**



Coach Larry Stewart called him the finest small man he ever coached in twenty years, and as the noise and the cheers fade away.....I see coaches from the past here at Central Hall....Bill Weber of Greenville, whose sad eyes with the heavy bags beneath them was pathetic proof that coaching this frustrating game takes its toll of flesh and years from the men whose lives depended upon the actions of kids too young to vote but old enough to get a coach sacked if they didn't win. And I see white-haired Larry Stewart, spending almost as much time keeping his players scholastically eligible as he did coaching them and the lifting

three of his teams to a height that Foxcroft teams since have never achieved, followed by the successful demands of some that he be fired, but..... that was yesterday, and now tonight, the lobby downstairs isn't packed with Tuesday and Friday night critics and self-appointed coaches lost in clouds of enveloping smoke dissecting players. The baskets and backboards are only silent reminders of the past when .... Players I wrote about such as Genest and Hanson and Ryder of Greenville, and Severance and Smith and Dean and Marsh of Foxcroft, and so many hundreds of others whose names have been long forgotten from Dexter and Sangerville and Brownville Junction drove for lay-ups and pulled down rebounds, and heading for the bench during a

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(The Final Buzzer Sounds – Continued from Page 7)

time-out and onto the floor comes the Academy cheerleaders with their mascot Mutsy wearing a sweater with the letter F on it, and I'm at the scorer's table hurriedly jotting down notes to be used in my write-up for the *Observer* that week, and as these images dim.....



Lou and Ora Evans – his boss at the *Observer* for so many years.

I'm back in the present recalling other towns and other courts that were such an advantage to the home team as the Guilford gym with its steam pipes so low that only line-drive shots and not arching ones were

Successful, and the court at Sangerville, so small that the two foul circles and the center circle were intertwined like rings in a beer ad, and the stage at Greenville that helped the Lakers win so many, and the match box at Junction, and the swinging doors at Milo through which players went crashing as if they were being tossed out of Western saloons, and yet from these courts came the most successful – I'm not saying they were always the greatest – teams these schools ever produced. So now it's farewell to good old Central Hall as I remember it in the days of basketball – dirty, reeking with the smell of sweat, poorly lit, no showers, no locker space, no seating room, nothing, but, oh, those days are so vividly etched into the minds of all who ever played or watched games there that though we see a thousand games in a thousand years, this Hall will always remain something special in our memories.

.... And I'm looking to the teachers room and fondly remember the halftime and between games chatter and comradery that I enjoyed there with coaches and officials and others whose lives were caught up so inextricably with basketball.

**..... the game has ended with FA trailing MCI by two points and Bob Thomas steps to the foul line with all the players on the bench to sink without a trace of pressure two shots that send the game into overtime when it's won by the Academy, and two capacity crowds so reminiscent of the past watching FA and Milo battle thrillingly for the league championship and a tournament, and Bob White crashing the boards for a rebound and coaches Champion and Beck suffering silently ....**

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(The Final Buzzer Sounds – Continued from Page 8)

... out on the floor are sons of my classmates and cheerleaders whose fathers were in my class also, and suddenly it makes me feel old, as if I had finally come full circle as I started writing about their parents seemingly only yesterday but actually long years ago and then had chronicled the exploits of hundreds of other players until now my game write-ups of today have been joined with those of 1947 through the relationship of fathers and their sons. Twenty years! Lord, how many games, how many baskets and foul shots and missed



three-on-one breaks, how many thrills of watching Newman beat PCHS at the buzzer at Dexter and Bob Annis beating PCHS at the buzzer and FA beating Lincoln over there in overtime, and watching Tom Zilinsky slow the game to a walk at PCHS to help us win and watching the tournament team of 1948 play absolutely perfect ball without substitution to whip Pemetic, seeing Junction last year with the State championship, and how many heartbreaking losses with Junction beating us at Dexter for a tournament berth and Orono getting a shot at the buzzer to beat us there, and a loss to Milo when Hackett scored back in 1948, and overtime loss at PCHS despite 34 points by Ireland, and so many countless other that so wrenched my heart until it is almost past caring.

And yet, deny as I might, the sound of a ball being dribbled and the shrill sound of the ref's whistle and the "if-he-can't-do-it-nobody-can" cheers and the opening tap will always cause my heart to leap and the flame of hope for victory to burn more brightly. Though I'm saying goodbye to the game, I've lived with basketball too long for these things not to do otherwise.



Lou and Mary inspect the restoration of Central Hall in 2016. He could still climb the stairs – and recount thrilling games even after seventy years! Lou, and the memories of so many people who he wrote about, were the primary reason the Historical Society undertook to revitalize Central Hall. We hope to make him proud!

## Annual Dues

Many thanks to all those who have sent in their Historical Society dues for 2016. 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*.

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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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## Time, Talent and Treasure

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society is fortunate to have approximately 250 dues paying members. Well over half of you have already contributed this year's dues. We are extremely grateful. Your contributions make it possible for all of us to continue to preserve and share our town's heritage. There are many ways to make contributions. If you have spare time, there are a number of projects just waiting in the wings. For instance, we are heavily involved in detailed planning for lighting, landscaping and facilities for the Central Hall project. If you have an interest and some time to spare to work with us, we would be delighted to have you join us.

We have over twenty two thousand items in our collections at the moment. New ones come in every week. You may be interested in helping us catalog and preserve all of these treasures. Come and help. Our Thursday workdays are a lot of fun. You will meet a bunch of really nice people – and you are likely to run across treasures from your past. What's not to like?

We are always on the lookout for items to add to our collections. Perhaps you are cleaning out mom and dad's attic and are wondering what to do with that old trunk or old photo albums. They will likely find a home with us. We are experts at preserving fragile memories. Better yet, there is no better way to share them with your friends and neighbors – and to pass those memories on to the next generation.

Finally, consider a planned gift to the Historical Society. That way, you can all be confident that the good work of the Historical Society will go on for generations to come. Contact Mary Annis, our president, or any board member, to discuss how you can enrich the community and add enjoyment to your own life by contributing your Time, Talent and Treasures to the Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society.

## A Bibliography

Lou wrote and had published at least six books. In addition, he wrote hundreds of articles in the *Eastern Gazette* and, especially, in the *Piscataquis Observer*, where he worked for over 40 years. He told of showing up unannounced in 1947 to ask Mr. Evans if he could write up sports for the Academy. You can find copies of most of his work at the Thompson Free Library and at the Historical Society. They are a joy to read. His books include:

*Dover-Foxcroft: A History*, 1995 755 pages (the definitive history of Dover-Foxcroft)

*200 Years of Dover-Foxcroft History*, 1999 712 pages

*100 Years of Foxcroft Academy Football*, (no date) 208 pages

*My Best Articles*, 2005 191 pages

*Scenes and Silhouettes*, 1959

*Booming! Dover and Foxcroft from 1881-1892*, (no date) 121 pages

In addition, Lou wrote hundreds of articles in the *Observer* titled "Louis Stevens Observes" from the mid 1950's to the early 1990's.

## Our Corporate Sponsors

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

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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

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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)

**Thank you all!**

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