



By The River's Edge

Skowhegan History House Society Newsletter

Spring 2011 Edition

skowheganhistoryhouse.org

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History House Founder
Louise Helen Coburn

A Skowhegan Soldier

By Lee Granville, Curator

On a pleasant summer day in 1998, an elderly gentleman parked at our museum and introduced himself to the curator, Mary Vermette. He told her his name was Earle Crawford and he had just arrived on a visit from his home in Iowa. He had just visited the Skowhegan Town Office, where he had asked if there were a local historical society or museum that might be interested in the donation of some of his grandfather's personal memorabilia. Most fortunately someone there had suggested Skowhegan History House.



Lee Granville

Mr. Crawford looked through the historic house and apparently made up his mind that this was a satisfactory repository for his inheritance. He told Mary that his main interest was to find a place that would properly care for his grandfather's possessions and make them available to be seen and appreciated by the people of Skowhegan. Mary told him that most of the items in the History House collection were from the 1800's. Earle indicated that would be fine as most of this material, that of his grandfather Alex Crawford, was from the time of the American Civil War.

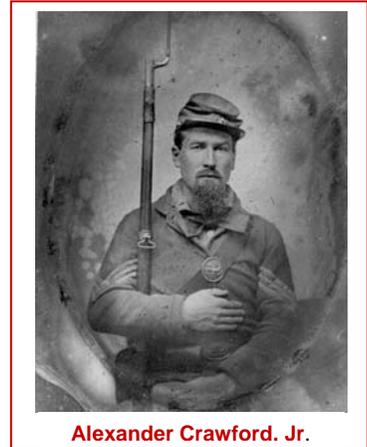
Alex Crawford was born in 1838 on a farm at the end of a lane just off the Dudley's Corner Road in Skowhegan. His father, Alexander Sr., was a farmer, but for a large part of his life he drove the Skowhegan to Bangor stagecoach. He made three round trips a week, one way each day for many years. Young Alex received his primary education at the Dudley's Corner Schoolhouse about a mile down the road. Later he graduated from the Bloomfield Academy on Baptist Hill in Skowhegan Village. In 1863 he enlisted in the 21st Maine Volunteers for a period of nine months, one of 294 men who enlisted from Skowhegan during the Civil War.

After being shuffled about for several months, his unit was sent to New Orleans to fight against the Confederate forts along the Mississippi River. They were engaged in the battle of Port Hudson, LA, May 26 — July 9, 1863. Twenty-seven men were killed or died of wounds, 145 died of disease. The Louisiana lowlands were a terrible place for Maine soldiers during the torrid summer of 1863. The hardy New Englanders had no natural immunity to malaria, yellow fever or any of the myriad tropical diseases endemic to the region. What statistics don't show are the lingering effects of that campaign on the survivors. Many of the men carried malaria home with them to be battled periodically for the rest of their lives. A number were

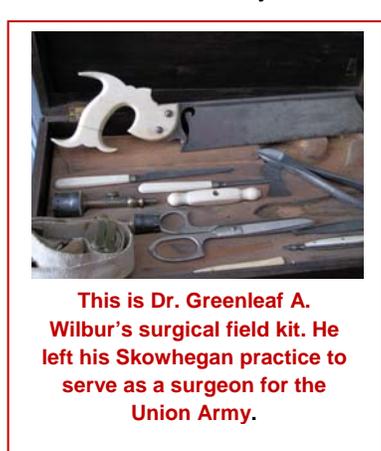
wounded in battle but survived, and these also do not show among the casualties. Alex Crawford was included in this group. Sometime in June he was shot through the right shoulder, a deep and painful wound involving broken bones.

The man the bullet left behind barely survived the medical treatment that followed. His first experience was in the frightening conditions of the field hospital and then in a crowded ward in summer-hot New Orleans. Alex was then sent by way of Florida and eventually treated in Washington, D.C., where he spent several months. The 21st was mustered out after nine months' service in August of 1863. However, Alex was still under hospitalization. Sometime in the early fall, he was ordered to the Cony Military Hospital in Augusta, Maine, now known as Togus. He was then allowed to travel home to Skowhegan for short intervals but had to commute by rail to Augusta for treatment. What happened next on the war front I find incredible!

During the winter of 1863-64, Ulysses Grant was promoted to lieutenant general and made supreme commander of all Union armies. After lackluster results by a series of generals, Grant had been chosen by President Lincoln because, he said, "This man fights!" Grant laid out a plan to advance against the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, defended by General Robert E. Lee, who had soundly beaten most of the Yankee generals he came up against. Grant's Overland Campaign of 1864, as it came to be called, was brutally simple. If he had enough men, he could, if necessary, afford to lose two to every one of the enemy's and still win the war. He called upon Lincoln to raise as many new units as possible. Maine was asked to raise two new volunteer regiments, the 31st and the 32nd.



Somehow Alex Crawford was enticed to join the 31st in October of 1863. His wound was not completely healed; he was still making outpatient visits to the Augusta hospital, but duty called. He may have been offered the prospect of becoming a commissioned officer although he enlisted as a sergeant. March and April were hectic months as the veterans scrambled to turn young Maine boys into soldiers in barely a month's time. Recruitment continued even as training progressed; some of the last recruits received no more than two weeks' training before being sent off to battle. The Regiment left Maine on April 18, 1864, and proceeded to the Washington, D.C. area for a brief stay. On May 5th the partially trained regiment was thrown into the battle of the Wilderness near Chancellorsville, Virginia, where they lost heavily. One local man, Nathan Weston of Madison, was one of those late trainees who joined the 31st in late March. He was wounded on the first day of battle and died in a Philadelphia hospital about a week later. His entire military service lasted barely six weeks.



In less than one year's time the 31st Maine lost 674 men, killed or wounded in action, three-fourths of this loss occurring in May, June and July 1864. Somehow, Alex Crawford survived this series of the worst battles of the war. After the Wilderness came Spotsylvania Courthouse, the North Anna River and one of the worst losses of the war from a Yankee perspective, Cold Harbor, Virginia. The Union suffered 13,000 casualties there in a matter of a few days time. The nation was in a state of shock during that spring and summer of 1864 as they absorbed the loss of tens of thousands of their soldiers dying on the battlefields. Grant's "Overland Campaign" was now being referred to as "Grant's Meat Grinder" by many Northern newspapers.

These horrendous losses were too much for even the pragmatic Grant to continue. He later said in his biography that "Cold Harbor was the only attack I ever ordered that I wished I had not." He changed his strategy, bypassing the heavily fortified Confederate capital of Richmond, setting up a siege of neighboring Petersburg, the major rail center supplying the Southern army. The plan now called for patience, slowly strangling Robert E. Lee's army with a lack of supplies.

The new strategy worked although it was another ten months before Lee surrendered at Appomattox in early April 1865. Alex Crawford and the 31st Regiment were fully involved until the very end, fighting the battle of Sailor's Creek, one of the last pivotal battles of the war. Sometime during the siege of Petersburg, probably at the battle of the Mine Explosion July 30, 1864, Crawford's Co. G. suffered the loss of its commanding officer, Capt. O. E Bartlett. Nearly a year later in June 1865, Crawford was given a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant and assumed command of Co. G. At that time he inherited Captain Bartlett's field desk that contained the Co. records, which became a part of the Crawford Collection left to History House.



Crawford's Euchre cards he used while serving in the 31st Regiment Infantry during the Civil War

One of Crawford's letters to his young pen pal and future wife, Lucinda Fletcher, dated April 14th 1865, describes his Regiment's activities during the last days of fighting. His letters to Miss Fletcher, whom he affectionately called "Tin," were usually very short on war news but this was an exception.

"Near Burkesville Junction Va. April 14th 1865. '... About three hours after I received your last letter, I was on my way to try and brake (sic) the Rebel lines in our front and try to go into Petersburg which we did after one days hard fighting. My Co lost one man killed and six wounded. I was knocked down once and had my sword bent up by a piece of shell but I was not hurt and went into Petersburg the next morning. This is the city we have been fighting for so long but we did not stop there long. We kept on through the city marching along the South Side R.R.. We came to Nottoway Court House and took charge of 8,000 Rebel prisoners and went back most to Petersburg; left them and started back once more. We arrived here last night and went into camp in a nice grove and glad we was to find a place to rest. We have marched 125 miles since we started and plenty of mud we have been throwed in. I hope, Tin, that there will not be anymore fighting in this war." (spelling in context-sic)

Then Crawford interjects a bit of boastful humor. *"I told you I was coming out to crush this rebellion and you see I have done it, Genl. Grant and I. Genl. Lee surrendered as soon as he heard I was here!"*

Crawford goes on to describe the beauty of the Virginia countryside in the spring. The trees are all leafed out and "Peaches trees" are in bloom. He has acquired the services of a black servant. He uses the N word to describe him and calls him a good boy. He mentions that he has received a picture from Tin and assures her that he will take care of it. Then he reveals his homesickness and hints at his desire to deepen the relationship between them. Alex is now twenty-six and Lucinda is seventeen.

In May 1865, The 31st Maine was ordered to encamp near Alexandria, Virginia, just across the Potomac from Washington D.C. There they would stay until ordered back to Maine to be mustered out in August. Alex is fully responsible for Co. G, but with the war over and not many duties to perform; he has time to reflect upon the events of the past year and ponder his future.

In a letter dated April 30, 1865, he had written to Tin. It seems that Alex perhaps realizes how fortunate he is to be alive and now how he needs to plan for the future.

"It has been just one year to the day from the time the Regt. Left"... "I have been thinking about what we have been through this past year. I had about sixty men in my Co. then...there are only about eight of them here now and they have about all been wounded. The rest of the Co. are all new men. (sic)

"Tin, may I hope to become better acquainted when this cruel war is over. I often think of you while out on guard duty these moonshiny nights. The boys are talking about going home now that the war is over. I think it will be some time before we get home. I bid you good night hoping that it will not be long before I can be where you can hear me say it. From Your Sincer Friend Lieut. Alex (sic)

One momentous day in his life, May 24, 1865, stands out in his letters to Tin. In the morning he received a pass to cross the Potomac into Washington D.C. to take in the last of the military victory parades down Pennsylvania Avenue that of General Sherman's Grand Review, He returns to his tent in Alexandria late at night and writes another letter home to Tin.

"This has been a grate week at Washington on account of the grate Review which came off their last Tusday and Wednesday my Regt was in the Review Tusday and came back to camp that night. The next day I got a pass and went to Washington on my own book and saw Genl Shermans Army reviewed it was a grand sight, in the evening I went to the Theatre the play was Uncle Toms Cabin I had never seen it played before it was very good I wish you could have been their, the was a big crowd their..."(sic)

"And now Tin I will approach a subject which lays nearest my hart we have been corresponding in friendship for some time and all of that time and a long time I have loved you and now I ask can you return thoughts feelings you may laugh at this and call it silly but it cant be helped but I am no hand to write love letters and that you can see without my telling you... I remaine as ever your loving Friend, Alex"(sic)

As spring turns to a hot Virginia summer, Alex finishes his military duties and prepares to return to Maine to muster out. Finally in mid-August, the company boards a train for Augusta. In true military fashion, the train takes them to Bangor instead, and there the men wait for days to be discharged. Alex, having a bit more clout as an officer, "Sneaks away" to return home to Skowhegan for a few days before returning to Bangor. When he finally reaches home he is in for a rude surprise. His parents, suffering ill health and becoming indebted, have sold the family farm. They have rented it back and still live there, but it belongs to someone else. This turn of events dashed the hopes of an early marriage for Alex and Lucinda; they had planned to use the money he had saved up in the army to build a separate apartment in the home and make a living farming there. Now this was not possible. Another problem was the farm had not been worked for more than five years and was not yet ready to support another family.

Alex and Tin decided to wait on marriage until he could resolve the problem. Meanwhile, she would continue to live with her parents in New Sharon, about thirty miles from Skowhegan. Alex found some way to repurchase the farm, but it took his available cash and no doubt he had to incur some debt as well. This was not Alex's only problem.

After months of longing to come home, of wanting to be closer to Tin and his family, Alex found himself bored to death with life in a small and insular community. Life in any small town in Maine revolved around church activities and small social events like box socials and spelling bees. Most of his friends from before the war were gone, many never to return. To a man who had traveled over most of the Eastern U.S., been stationed for months near the nation's capital, become accustomed to military procedures and disciplines, lived the rough and tumble life of a soldier, Skowhegan may have seemed like a rural backwater! In September, Alex wrote to Tin, apologizing for not answering her letters and telling about a five day trip he had just returned from to Mt. Bigelow with a half dozen of his old company mates, ostensibly to pick blueberries but more likely to camp out under the stars like soldiers. Dolefully he says, *"Sometimes I wish another war would brake out so I could go!"*



Gradually, as winter set in and Alex became more accustomed to local events, his letters became gentler and he paid more attention to Tin and her life. However, the best part of his week was on Sunday, when his family was at church and he had the house to himself. "Bachelor's quarters", he calls these Sunday mornings, and he guards his private times carefully, never going to church himself. Like many veterans of all wars, his personality would never again be quite the same.

Finally after more than three long years, Alex and Lucinda were married in November 1868. After marriage with no need to write letters, their lives are a bit harder for us to follow. Their marriage lasted just fourteen years. In 1882 at the age of thirty-six, Tin died of some progressive disease, probably cancer. After several years as a widower, Alex married a much younger woman, Ellen Williams. Sadly, she died in June of 1887, twenty two months after marriage. She was just 24 years old. In 1893 at the age of fifty-five, the old Skowhegan soldier died from tetanus, one of the hazards of life on farms powered by horses.

They had one child, a son named Eugene. He was well educated and became the city engineer for Waterville for a while and then moved to the Midwest, likely in pursuit of a better paying job.

Eugene had just one son, Earle. He was the elderly gentleman, who on that that pleasant afternoon in 1998, returned his grandfather's legacy to its permanent resting place in Skowhegan.

A New Name, New Hours, Lengthened Week & Year

As we all know, times have changed and the History House Association, Inc. Board of Directors realizes that History House is more than a history house. It is a unique museum as well as a historical research center. So to better reflect what History House really offers the Board has added a tag, Museum & Research Center, onto the original name, Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center.

The name is not the only thing that has changed. Beginning this year the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center will open the day after Memorial Day and remain open through the Saturday before Columbus Day in October. The museum and research center will be open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, except on holidays.

The Board hopes that the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center will become more patron-friendly with extended opportunities to visit and accessible on Saturdays. In order to provide the lengthened hours, week, and year another part time person will be hired. Additionally, volunteers will be called upon to assist visitors during tours.

A new name, new hours, lengthened week and year will prove to be a challenge and exciting.

Forty-four Years of Service as a Trustee

Jim Hastings has serviced on the Board of Trustees for the Skowhegan History House for forty-four years. Harvey Doane Eaton asked him if he would be willing to consider becoming a Trustee and invited Jim to a meeting one evening. Margaret Wentworth and Miriam Brier were also Trustees at the time.

History has long been a major focus in Jim's lifetime. Courses in high school and college and more recently history courses at Colby covering American, Russian, Japanese and African history have helped increase his knowledge and focus. When asked what had kept his interest in serving so long on this Board Jim replied, "Construction projects to shore up the kitchen floor, plugging leaks in the roof and chimneys, continuing the walk to the street, etc. all needed to be done." I'm "always recruiting new members and I never found it easy to bow out." The Board of Trustees for the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center is very happy Jim Hastings has remained interested and involved.

Jim and his wife, Corilla, used to operate the Brick Farm Gift Shop and Nursery. Jim has held offices in the International Lilac Society, Somerset County Cooperative Extension, as well as, the History House. He also serves as a Hospice Volunteer and a volunteer grant writer for the Skowhegan Free Public Library.

Board of Trustees

Melvin Burnham, President
Patricia Horine, Treasurer
Ron La Fratta, Financial Clerk
Margaret Reid, Secretary
Ruth Blood
Bonnie Chamberlain
Ronda Ducret
Joyce Foley
Lee Granville
James Hastings

Our Mission

*"Preserving an increasingly valuable historic collection
representing Skowhegan's legacy and promoting
Skowhegan's cultural heritage."*

**We invite you to visit the Skowhegan History House Museum
& Research Center Online.**

By The River's Edge, Skowhegan History House Society Newsletter- Published twice annually
Editor & Graphics Designer- Melvin Burnham, President Board of Trustees
Assistant Editor/Researcher- Ruth Blood, Trustee

Visit the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center Online!



www.skowheganhistoryhouse.org

Skowhegan History House is now online thanks to Web designer Nancy Jervey owner of Jervey Design and Melvin Burnham, President of the History House Association, Inc.

The new website offers visitors extensive information concerning: **Association, Photo Gallery, Heirloom Gardens, Research, Exhibits, Heritage Shop, Giving Opportunities, Hours/Location, Volunteer Information, Contact Us/ Links, Newsletters/ Articles**, as well as information under **Before You Visit**.

Visitors are also offered the choice of making donations using the "Donate" button which uses a secure credit card service and Paypal. The website also offers visitors an introduction to the DVD entitled History House Tour with Lee Granville.

Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center 2011 Programs & Events

- April 13** **Our Connections with the Civil War-** A panel of local historians will lead a discussion of our connections with the Civil War along with Alan Foxwell and company providing musical selections from the Civil War Period. This program will be presented by Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center and the Skowhegan Free Public Library. Refreshments will be provided by the Friends of the Library.
7:00 PM, Skowhegan Free Public Library
- May 14** **Heritage Plant Sale-** Skowhegan History House ornamental Heirloom Gardens were established in 2005 and are maintained by Master Gardener Patricia Horine. This sale will contain a large variety of old-fashioned plant materials that would have been available to New England gardeners in the mid-1800s.
9:00 – 12:00, Skowhegan Savings Bank Parking Lot, Corner of Madison and Norridgewock Ave.
- May 18** **Volunteer- Open House**
3:30 – 5:30 PM, Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center
- May 31** **2011 Opening of Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center**
Open 10:00 – 4:00, Tuesday - Saturday
- June 1** **"After Hours" Social** to celebrate the 2011 Opening of History House- Year 74-will be held in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. Music, refreshments, and door prizes will be provided.
5:00 – 7:00 PM, Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center
- June 4** **Heritage Tea** co-sponsored by the Bloomfield Garden Club and Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center
2:00 – 4:00 PM Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center-
Heirloom Gardens & Riverside Lawns
- July** **Cemetery Tours** TBA
- July 30** **Heritage Days at Skowhegan History House-** Professionals demonstrate their craft and share their work originating in the early days of American history.
10 – 2:00, Skowhegan History House Museum and Research Center and Riverside Lawns
- July 10 – August 28** **Concerts in the Park-** Hosted by Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center (July 10, 17, 24, 31 & August 7, 14, 21, 28)
5:00 – 6:15 Coburn Park



October 13 **Volunteer Recognition Luncheon**, 11:30 AM, Heritage House Restaurant

Help Needed! Volunteers!

An Open House will be held at the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center on May 18th, 3:30 – 5:30 PM, for all returning volunteers and those who may be interested in volunteering.

We could not operate the History House without conscientious volunteers. Volunteers are wonderful people, willing to give of themselves to support community non-profits such as Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center. Like most non-profits, we depend on our volunteers to help us reach our mission of “preserving and promoting our community’s cultural heritage.”

A new volunteer program was initiated last year and a half dozen dependable folks signed up and many others inquired about the volunteer opportunities late in the season. This year, with our increased hours and lengthened week and year, we will depend more heavily than ever on our dedicated volunteer team. Mrs. Wendy Labrecque joined the volunteer team last year and thoroughly enjoyed working with the Master Gardener in the Heirloom Gardens. Wendy has volunteered to serve as our Volunteer Coordinator this year. She will assist in recruiting volunteers and creating the volunteer schedule for the museum and research center; assist in providing training for volunteers; and serve as the contact person for the volunteer program. Our goal is to have at least one volunteer on hand when the museum and research center is open to patrons.



Volunteer Coordinator,
Wendy Labrecque

We welcome volunteers who are interested in local history and historic preservation, people who enjoy working and sharing with other like-minded individuals.

Volunteers are needed for the following tasks:

- **Assisting with visitors and tours**
- **Cataloging artifacts and other historic materials**
- **Designing and creating displays**
- **Maintaining and cleaning the museum and research center**
- **Assisting the History House Master Gardener in the Heirloom Gardens and with landscaping**
- **Performing clerical work**
- **Answering the phone during operational hours**
- **Researching and/or writing articles for publication**
- **Teaching small groups of children about local history and historic preservation**
- **Assisting the Board of Trustees in accomplishing major projects pertaining to the History House- solicitation of funds, preparing materials for distribution or mailings, creating presentations, etc., and**
- **Assisting patrons with genealogical research or other research endeavors**

If you are interested in volunteering at the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center, please come to the Volunteer Open House, or contact Wendy Labrecque at 474-6184 or by email at VolunteerCoordinator@skowheganhistoryhouse.org.

Check Us Out On Facebook!

Facebook!



Facebook Training: L to R, Melvin Burnham, Debra Burnham, Bonnie Chamberlain, Kylie Whittemore, and Danica Strout.

Yes, Skowhegan History House & Research Center is on the Internet and Facebook! In October the Skowhegan History House & Research Center established a fan page on Facebook. Danica Strout and Kylie Whittemore, students in Mr. Robert Gauvin’s Digital Arts Class at the Somerset Career and Technical Center, brought Melvin Burnham, Debra Burnham, and Bonnie Chamberlain up to speed in the current Facebook techniques and processes. These student consultants assisted in the development of the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center’s Facebook page and all of its attributes. Check us out on Facebook.

Giving Opportunities

The History House Association, Inc. - Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center welcomes financial support to further its goals and mission, programming, general operations, and endowment activities. ***History House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization and your donation is tax deductible within the limits of the Internal Revenue Code.***

For information on any of the following giving opportunities please contact the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center, P.O. Box 832, Skowhegan, Maine 04976, the Curator at LeeGranville@skowheganhistoryhouse.org, or any member of the Board of Trustees.

Society Membership In 2006, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Skowhegan History House, the Board of Trustees of the History House Association, Inc. created a society to assist in the further advancement of the organization. Members of the Skowhegan History House Society represent patrons, families, and friends of the History House who wish to support financially the Association's efforts in preserving Skowhegan's legacy and promoting its heritage. Annual and lifetime memberships are offered. In addition to supporting the History House, membership benefits include: subscriptions to the Society's Newsletters, access to the research center, invitations to events, and the opportunity to submit articles for publication in the newsletter.

Major Partner History House Association, Inc. welcomes patrons, families, and friends of History House who wish to support financially the Association's efforts at a higher level. This level of support allows the Association to fast track projects that dramatically affect programming that preserves, protects, and promotes our heritage. Partnership benefits may include: Partnership Plaque- honoring the donor; Preferred Partner Brochure Rack; Recognition on all Donor Lists, subscriptions to History House Society Newsletter; and an opportunity for a private tour with the Curator and/or Master Gardener.

In Memoriam Families, family members, or friends may make memorial donations to the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center in honor of their loved one. Memorial donations will be respectfully recorded in the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center Memorial Giving Registry and maintained for public review at the History House as well as published on all Donor listings.

Remembrance Remembrance donations may be arranged through the deceased's obituary notice. Donations may be sent in the deceased's memory to the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center, P.O. 832, Skowhegan, Maine 04976.

Annual Appeal Society members and friends of the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center can make tax deductible contributions to the Annual Appeal. Donations advance the goals and mission, programming, general operations, and endowment activities. Although Annual Appeal gifts are usually made within a few weeks of the appeal event, gifts in any amount may be made throughout the year. Such gifts may honor loved ones on birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, etc. Acknowledgments will be promptly mailed to donors and listed in all donor listings.

Stocks, Bonds, or Tangible Property Donation of stocks, bonds, or securities is an important and useful way of supporting the History House Association Inc. - Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center. If you are interested in making a donation of this type, please contact your broker and ask them to arrange the transaction. Donations of real estate or other personal property are also welcome.

Bequests and Trusts Donors are encouraged to make charitable donations to the History House Association Inc. -Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center in the form of a bequest in a will, the establishment of a trust, or other financial arrangements. Such gifts are structured to support the goals and mission of the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center while assuring the security of the donor or the donor's family. Those interested in arranging a bequest or trust should make such arrangements through their attorney.

Historic Items Those interested in donating items to the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center should contact the Curator to discuss the proposed donation and its relevance to the existing collections at the History House. Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center cannot appraise donated items. Donors should consult an independent appraiser.

Wanted! We Need Your Help!

We need additional computers at the Skowhegan History House & Research Center for digitally cataloging the collections. We are looking for new or gently used laptop PC computers capable of supporting our Past Perfect cataloging program so that several volunteers will be able to work on this gigantic task at the same time.

Contact Melvin Burnham, 474-2162 or MelvinBurnham@skowheganhistoryhouse.org.

Skowhegan Historic Home Registry

A new program that documents and celebrates Skowhegan homes dated 100+ years old.

Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center is now offering an opportunity for residents of Skowhegan with homes at least 100 years old to participate in its Historic Home Registry Program. The Skowhegan Historic Home Registry is modeled after a program set up by the Norridgewock Historical Society several years ago. The Skowhegan program provides an opportunity for the owner of a home that is at least one hundred years old to document the home's age, register it in the Historic Home Registry, and to display an approved house marker indicating the original homesteader, the year of construction, and the owner's affiliation with the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center-Historic Home Registry Program.

The process includes providing evidence of the deeds of the various owners of the property dating back to the original construction date and original homesteader. Participants may do the research themselves at the Somerset County Registry of Deeds, or a representative of History House will conduct the research for a minimal fee. Once the "Chain of Deeds" is certified, a copy of the original deed, the "Chain of Deeds," and all other related photos and documents provided by the participant will be filed at the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center.



Also, certified owners will be offered the opportunity to order an approved house marker to affix to the historic property. The markers are hand painted by a Farmington artisan who works with similar programs across New England.

Recently, two Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center Trustees, Ruth Blood and Bonnie Chamberlain, completed the "Chain of Deeds" for the History House property. Their research took them back to 1839; James H. K. Lord purchased the property and erected a brick building that now serves as the Skowhegan History

House Museum & Research Center. In this little brick house James H. K. Lord, faithful deacon in the Baptist Church, and his wife brought up their family of ten children "in the fear of the Lord and to sing in the choir." In 1936 the large el was constructed on the back of the home for Louise Helen Coburn's museum.

Skowhegan has numerous old homes dating well before 1900 that have interesting histories and are of importance and significance to our community's history. It is the hope of the Trustees of the Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center that owners of properties dating back 100 years or more will share their historic record with other community members so we all will have a better sense of our town's architectural heritage.

Further information pertaining to the Historic Home Registry can be found under "Programs" on our website: www.skowheganhistoryhouse.org.

"Our Connections with the Civil War"

Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center, Board of Trustees has set "Our Connections with the Civil War" as the theme for 2011 in honor and celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War and in commemoration of our 294 sons that Skowhegan sent to fight for the preservation of our Union. Our events, programs, and tours will use this theme to develop the sense of our connectedness with this momentous event in our nation's history.

Bird's-Eye View Historic Maps

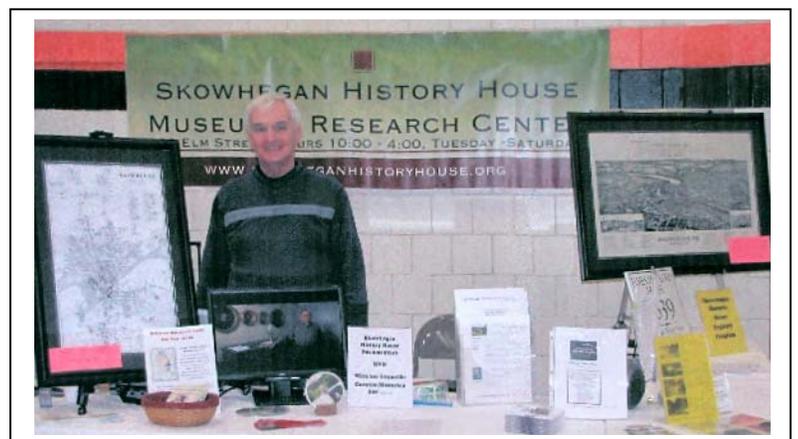


The decades from the late 19th century to early 20th century were the golden era of bird's-eye view maps in the United States. As towns and cities grew and became prosperous thanks to industrialization, it became fashionable and a matter of civic pride to advertise this newfound economic vitality in the form of oblique panoramic maps. Itinerant panoramists traveled from town to town primarily in the Northeast and northern Midwest mapping furiously as they went. The panoramists did not go up in hot air balloons or strap miniature cameras to pigeons or kites to gather information for their panoramas. Instead, they stayed firmly on the ground drafting a street map in perspective based on a grid they had fashioned. Next, they walked through the town sketching the facades of buildings that would appear from the viewing direction that they had chosen. Finally, they drafted the final panorama, filling in detail from the building sketches they made in the field.

Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center is taking orders for 20" X 30" or 16" X 24" prints of this panoramic map of Skowhegan (1892) with Hotel Heselton advertisements. This beautiful professional print is crisp, clean and ready for framing. It would look wonderful in any place of prominence. Select the Heritage Shop tab on our website, www.skowheganhistoryhouse.org for more information about this detail panorama and one other historic map ca. 1883. Both would make perfect gifts.

FAB Fair Time

Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center hosted an exhibit at the 2011 Fun & Business Fair sponsored by the Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce. Trustee Ron La Fratta is pictured here covering the exhibit on February 26th.



Check Out the Treasure of the Month on Our Website
www.skowheganhistoryhouse.org

Trustees Take a Field Trip



In November 2010, Trustees Melvin Burnham, Bonnie Chamberlin, Ron La Fratta, and Patricia Horine along with Wendy Labrecque, Volunteer Coordinator, visited the Bethel Historical Society & Research Center in Bethel Maine. Executive Director Randall Bennett, Associate Director Stanly Howe, and Administrative Assistant Dana Nickerson gave the group a tour of their facilities and then shared ideas on how they have changed their operation to keep up with the times and prosper. Their society boasts over 1000 members and enjoys some helpful endowments. The History House Trustees came away with some great ideas some of which have already been implemented.

Louise Helen Coburn

1856 - 1949

Skowhegan's Renaissance Woman



Coming this fall an in-depth biographical sketch and ancestral outline of Louise Helen Coburn, the second female student to graduate from Colby College, one of the founders of Sigma Kappa Sorority, niece of Governor Abner Coburn-the richest man in Maine at his time, the founder of History House in 1937, author, philanthropist, poet, botanist, historian, civic leader, world traveler, woman before her time.

Skowhegan History House Membership Benefits

- ❖ Recognition as an interested supporter of the preservation and promotion of our heritage.
- ❖ Spring & Fall Newsletters
- ❖ Access to historical research
- ❖ Opportunity to submit articles for publication in the Society Newsletter
- ❖ Invitation to upcoming events
- ❖ Consultation with the Curator and/or Master Gardener

Skowhegan History House Society Membership Form

Please Print

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-mail Address (Optional): _____

Circle relevant Annual Membership Category or Lifetime:

Student/Senior (65+) \$15

Individual (1 Person) \$25

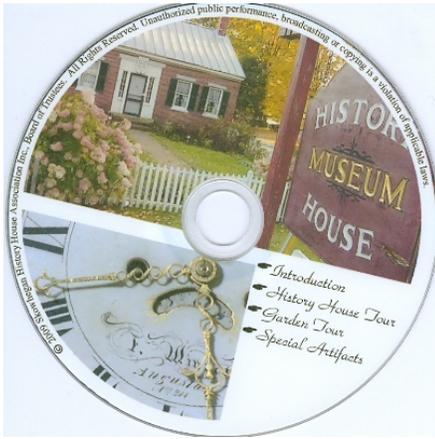
Family \$50

Business \$100

Benefactor \$150

Lifetime (2 Individuals) \$300

Checks payable to: **Skowhegan History House Museum & Research Center, P. O. Box 832, Skowhegan, Maine 04976** Credit cards may be used online at skowheganhistoryhouse.org- use donate button and include explanation.



Tour History House on DVD

A professional film documenting the Skowhegan History House and featuring Curator Lee Granville has been completed. Mr. Allen Baldwin of Catama Film and Video of South Portland and a native of Norridgewock, was the cinematographer/director of the film. This archive-quality documentary film, funded by the Maine Community Foundation, features the Skowhegan History House collection and Curator Lee Granville as he conducts a guided tour. The film, which is in DVD format, also includes a tour of the Heirloom Gardens with Master Gardener, Patricia Horine.

Although an in-person tour of this nineteenth century icon is always best, the new DVD allows those who live away or who are not able to access the History House to see the valuable historic collections representing Skowhegan's legacy. Copies are now on sale online at Heritage Shop www.skowheganhistoryhouse.org and at the following Skowhegan retailers: Wish on Madison Ave.; Blueberry Cupboard; and The Bankery on Water Street.

“Mr. Granville possesses an in-depth knowledge of the collection and its relevancy to our community’s history. We want to preserve his unique knowledge, which currently exists only as an oral history.”

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P. O. Box 832
Skowhegan, Maine 04976