



Colburn House
582-7080

Arnold Expedition Historical Society

Box 1775, Gardiner, Maine 04345

Jannice Baker, Sec'y
582-3648

October 8 1984

NEWSLETTER NO. 55

MEMBERS & FRIENDS OF A.E.H.S.

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Held on June 24, 1984 at the Colburn House our 16th Annual Meeting was one of the best. With regret, we changed Presidents in the middle of the meeting to allow John Skillin of Dixfield, Maine a long time member and school teacher to replace Executive Ned Schroeder of the S.D. Warren Co. Both of these young men have had much to offer and will continue to keep a close watch over all of our activities. The proposed amendment was properly passed resulting in a vote to hold our annual meeting in the month of October rather than June. Other officers were reinstated to serve the ensuing year. Our speaker was excellent !; the new Director of Fort Western - Jeffrey Zimmerman. His slides and presentation moved many of us to tour the Fort following our meeting. Response to our reminder that dues were due was gratifying and we thank all of you who got back to us so quickly and generously. Now on to our Curator --

UNDER THE CURATOR'S QUILL

The past twelve months have certainly been a big plus for the Major Reuben Colburn House. It not only received a great many exciting visitors of note, including members of the Colburn family, but saw the return of original period documents and a most important piece of the early furniture. One of the documents is the original hand written draft of the " Paper read by Francis W. Flitner in Pittston, Maine, at the Dedication of a Tablet to Colonel Benedict Arnold, August 28, 1913 ". Seventy years later Karen Milliman hosted the meeting here of the Samuel Grant Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution whose predecessors had placed that tablet on the boulder in the front yard.

On Saturday October 8, 1983, I rode up to Colburn Gore with my Bath Iron Works colleagues Ron Czaja and Lee Knowles to join other members of the AEHS for some Fall hiking, digging, and canoeing in the Arnold Pond and Height of Land area. Before the Columbus Day week-end was over we were joined by Bob Cunningham, Jon Dulude, Noreen Masse, Duluth Wing, Betty Wing, Kenny Wing, Ron Gamage, Ned Schroeder Florence Elliott, Gene Lockyer, James Espeaignette, Henry Dillenbeck, Jannice Baker, John & Brenda, John Jr. & Sonja Skillin. We pooled our resources including metal detectors, wet suits, and cameras in an endeavor to determine exactly where Arnold's men had crossed the Height of Land. We got a good look at the actual International Border and some likely areas for another week-end soiree. We really missed Supervisor Cecil Pierce whom we hope can make it next time.

A week later the Colburn House was really jumping. We hosted the entire Pittston Elementary School, some 150 strong. They were bussed over in three sections and were very well behaved. Our reward was seeing history come alive to them as reflected back to us through their faces, questions and comments.

It was a relatively mild winter and the house continued to bear up quite well. In March, His Majesty's Independent Company of American Rangers and Woodsmen met here. These men and their wives remain quite loyal to the cause and have served the house well on several occasions.

Curator's Quill Cont'd:

Late in May Karen and I went afield and attended the meeting of the Augusta Branch of The American Association of University Women. I showed up in my Major Meigs outfit and after dinner showed slides of AEQ-'75 and spoke about the original Arnold Expedition.

In early June we were paid a visit by photographer Ron Maxwell and Feature Writer Mary Grow of the Waterville Sentinel. Ms. Grow went on to personally cover the Arnold Trail and I filled her in from time to time with details of those parts of the Trail which weren't very accessible. Saturday June 30th we were treated to a full page spread of which we can be most proud. We are much obliged to Ms. Grow for doing her "homework" so well in presenting "The Arnold Trail; Bicentennial crowds are gone; sights and footsteps of 1775 remain." Ron Maxwell's picture of the Colburn House was the finest.

One of the great things about the Colburn House is that you never know who or what will be waiting for you during the week when you get home from work. In July our dear neighbor and fine member Bunny Cummings came over with a box which had been delivered earlier by Marion L. Hannemann of Tenants Harbor. Mrs. Hannemann is a cousin of Helen Averell Colburn Pomeroy who was born in the Colburn House and currently lives in San Francisco. Mrs. Pomeroy is the niece of Bertha Colburn, the last member of the Colburn family to own and occupy the house. I am still going through the contents of the box which includes early newspaper clippings pertaining not only to Colonial History but of the Ice Industry as well, early handwritten genealogies, ancestral charts and Bertha Colburn's worksheets and membership certificate in the DAR. Probably the most important document, the likes of which every museum would like to have, is the original handwritten "Memories of My Childhood, written for my niece Helen Averell Colburn Pomeroy", by Bertha Colburn. It is this early first person account of life here at the house which I have started to transpose for future newsletters. How very fortunate we are to have such a document. We are grateful indeed for the thoughtfulness of all the ladies involved in preserving these cherished memories.

We were honored at the repeat request of The Friends of Gardiner's Heritage to again put the Major Reuben Colburn House on the second "Historic Kennebec House Tour". Some 200 tickets were sold and nearly everyone came here throughout the beautiful day on August 4th. Of the eleven homes and six churches on the Tour, the Colburn House remains the most interesting, the most exciting, for not only has this house hosted more history from within its walls, but has witnessed more developments and progress of the area as it looks even to this day, out over the Kennebec River. This is the only house (an island of great charm) in the area which has retained nearly all of its pleasing original 18th century lines and wavey glass windows, lovely panelling, not to mention the beautiful spacious yard studded with huge trees, a combination of entirely attractive and delightful traits.

Coinciding with the House Tour was the publication of "An Architectural and Historical Survey of the Gardiner Area"; in conjunction with The Friends of Gardiner. We enjoy a full page spread, including a large portrait of the Major Reuben Colburn House in "The Early Period" section up front. Unfortunately, the "experts" have taken several liberties with documented facts; nevertheless it is evident that a huge amount of personal resources went into this survey quite effectively "to recognize, preserve and promote the unique historical and cultural background of the Gardiner area".

Hardly another week had gone by when we were paid a surprise visit by Barbara Klopp and her son, the last occupants of the house before it was acquired by the State of Maine in 1972. Again, I was caught up in Mrs. Klopp's recollections of living in the house and her recalling what the yard had looked like years ago. The highlight of this visit had to be the return of an early Colburn artifact - a very lovely old ladder back rocking chair in a great state of preservation. Helen C. Pomeroy can remember accounts of skeins of yarn on the back of the chair being re-wound into balls after the yarn had passed over the horizontal slats. This might account for the very old smooth worn notches in the middle of the upper edges of the slats.

Curators Quill Cont'd:

Again we are most fortunate in having something of Colburn origin come back home. Mrs. Klopp also left an old Army man-drawn wagon for our museum. We are grateful for her thoughtfulness and generosity and for sharing her collections.

As I make the final dip into the inkwell, I pause to look out through the windows of the parlor (as Reuben Colburn might have done). What a perfectly gorgeous view-really ! The Fall foliage here along the Kennebec hasn't peaked yet but it hardly seems possible that it will get more vivid than it already is. This is my favorite room, and has to be my favorite time of year. While wrapping this up we have been visited by members of the Society, Mr& Mrs. Michael Audino on their way back to Albany, N.Y., and four lovely ladies have since come down from Norridgewock, Preakue Isle and Caribou to see the house and museum. They were here over two hours, saw everything and had a wonderful time. The greatest reward, however, has been with the likes of our most recent visitor, a young man in the 10-12 year old range who called ahead and made an appointment. His Mother drove him up from Bowdoinham this afternoon but HE " stole the show " and my heart along with it!. He investigated every batteau, and canoe out in the museum and went over everything to do with the house and Arnold Expedition. This was indeed another one of those instances when I wished that I could take this lad back in time. Wouldn't Major Colburn and Colonel Arnold have been delighted too. I hope I get to read John Lentz paper when he gets it back from his lucky teacher.

Cros Milliman

A NOTE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

After a very busy summer The Board Of Directors met on September 9, 1984 and made plans for yet another upcoming year. We are looking forward to another exciting week-end up in Stratton, Maine - it is hoped that a search of the Arnold Pond may continue and a look at the Upper Farm Campsite can yield some artifacts. I personally hope that many of you can attend this time.

In the more distant future plans are underway (and included in this newsletter) for our 10th anniversary trip to Quebec to commemorate our great AEQ-'75 Reenactment. This sounds most dynamic and has started to rekindle memories of that first big major event.

Our Society is alive and well! Perhaps each of you reading this can reach out and share all this with a friend, because the upcoming year looks like it will be one of continued activity and a chance to share in our mutual interest in the Arnold Trail.

Your Most Humble And Obedient Servant,
John W. Skillin, Pres.

" THE KENNEBECK PROPRIETORS " 1749-1775

We will get back to our story of the first settlers from the above named source, but have only room for a few lines this time :

The exact date when the first settlers reached their Frankfort destination is unknown, but it must have been quite early in the spring. At this unpromising time of year, the settlers would be able to do little more than clear the land. The hauling of logs at least, could be done with least effort while snow still covered the ground. In January 1752, Dr. Gardiner, William Bowdoin and Gershom Flagg, already managing settlement details back in Boston, were appointed to form a committee " to settle and regulate the Town of Frankfort on Kennebeck River and to appoint one or more persons under them for that purpose. This group was later expanded to a Committee of Ten and included nearly all of the large shareholders. Of these, the indomitable Dr. Gardiner was to prove by far the strongest moving force.



*** Available from us at \$1.50 per package ***
10 sheets of note paper with the above picture of the Colburn House
10 sheets of plain paper and 10 envelope.
Kindly add 50 cents if by mail



Arnold Expedition Historical Society
Box 1775, Gardiner, Maine 04345

NONPROFIT ORGAN
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
GARDINER, ME. 04345
PERMIT NO. 58

Structure must meet Nov. 11th
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Oct.