

September 2015

# Louise H. Coburn Correspondence

Louise Helen Coburn 1856-1949

Marion Cobb Fuller

*Maine State Library*

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## Recommended Citation

Coburn, Louise Helen 1856-1949 and Fuller, Marion Cobb, "Louise H. Coburn Correspondence" (2015). *Maine Writers Correspondence*. 180.

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COBURN, LOUISE H.

Born at Skowhegan, September 1, 1856.

I.R.C.

Mr. H. E. Dummick

State Librarian, Augusta, Me.

My dear Mr. Dummick.

Your letter is just received, having been forwarded for Skowhegan.

I thank you for your words about my book, and am complimented by your note to me of "Song to Maine" in your bulletin. I shall be pleased to have you use any part of it you desire in your bulletin.

Yours sincerely,  
Nashington, D. C. Lewis H. Colburn  
April 21, 1917

MISS LOUISE H. COBURN  
SKOWHEGAN, MAINE

February 22, 1928.

My dear Miss Fuller:

This is in answer to your letter of January 30, which I am sorry I have let go so long.

You ask if there are any other items, except those in the Brief Biographies, in regard to me. I have thought of several things that might be used. I will mention them and you can use any that you think appropriate and that will not make the account too long.

I haven't published any volume of poems since The Kennebec, but there might be added to that:

Contributor of Botanical Articles to  
Rhodora and Maine Naturalist;

Writer of Historical Articles in Maine,  
My State, and Just Maine Folks, and of  
Historical Pamphlets.

After Trustee Colby, you could put:

Coburn Classical Institute, Bloomfield Academy.

After member of Park Commission could come:

Member of Advisory Board Skowhegan Public Library.

To the list of societies could be added:

Maine Historical Society  
Ecological Society of America  
American Forestry Association

And to Clubs could be added:

Panhellenic Club of New York; National Officers Club, D.A.R.

To Maine Writer's Research Club:  
(President, 1927)

and finally:

Sigma Kappa Sorority (founder); Phi Beta Kappa,

Probably you will not want all these but it seems to make the account a little more complete. I think you prepared an account of Maine-born artists a little while ago. I should be glad to know where I could get a copy. I want to see if it includes one or two I have in mind.

Very truly yours,

*Louise H. Coburn*

COPY

February 23, 1928

Miss Louise Coburn,  
Skowhegan, Maine.

Dear Miss Coburn;-

Thank you for sending the additional  
details of your biography.

We are sending you copies of the latest  
issues of the Library Bulletin. The July-October issue contains  
the Who's Who of Maine Artists which you mentioned . It is  
one of the things which involve much labor and make very poor  
reading. We shall be glad to have you send us the names of any  
Maine-born artists of whom you know and who are not included  
in this list. We hope that some time we can publish a supplementary  
list. As is true of the poets, many names have come to us without  
biographical data and it is often difficult to find even  
such simple information as date and place of birth. .

We have placed your name on the Bulletin mailing  
list. The next issue is due in April.

Very truly yours

(Signed MCF)

Copy

Copy

December 5, 1932

December 5, 1932

Miss Louise H. Coburn  
Skowhegan, Maine

Miss Louise Coburn  
Skowhegan, Maine

My dear Miss Coburn:

My dear Miss Coburn:

I have read with much

We have received "Skowhegan on the Kennebec" for which we send you our sincere thanks.

I am taking it home tonight for reading, but meanwhile, I am sending this note of thanks.

We are especially grateful for the autograph.

an account of Michaux's travels in this section of the country?

I know that Thoreau refers to him in Kennecook (Page 48 in

Sincerely yours

volume three of Houghton Mifflin's edition of his writings)

but I have not found the book listed anywhere although I

State Librarian

find references to the accounts of his other travels. If you

will, at your convenience, tell me the source of your reference

I shall be very glad to have the information on file here.

Very truly yours,

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY MCF

RESEARCH LIBRARIAN

Copy

December 5, 1932

December 5, 1932

Miss Louise Coburn, Coburn,  
Skowhegan, Maine

Miss Louise H. Coburn  
Skowhegan, Maine

My dear Miss Coburn;-

I have read with much interest your monograph SKOWHEGAN ON THE KENNEBEC. It is a valuable addition to our town history section.

I note that you refer to the travels of Francois Andre Michaux. Can you tell me whether there is in print an account of Michaux's travels in this section of the country? I know that Thoreau refers to him in Ktaadn (Page 48 in volume three of Houghton Mifflin's edition of his writings) but I have not found the book listed anywhere although I find references to the accounts of his other travels. If you will, at your convenience, tell me the source of your reference I shall be very glad to have the information on file here.

Very truly yours,

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

BY MCF

RESEARCH LIBRARIAN

MISS LOUISE H. COBURN  
SKOWHEGAN, MAINE

Dec. 10, 1932

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

I would like very much to have sent me the Geology of Maine by Jackson. What I want to do is to have a copy made of a picture of Skowhegan Falls in 1839 from a sketch by J. T. Devereux, which is on page 18 according to my memorandum.

If it is interesting I want to have it photographed, and if you don't like to send it to me ~~and~~ would be kind enough to have a small photograph of it made, that would probably answer my purpose. But if you can do so I would like to see the book, and I would like to have it sent right off, if you will be so kind.

Yours truly,

*Louise H. Coburn*



December 12, 1932

Miss Louise Coburn,  
Skowhegan, Maine

Dear Miss Coburn;-

We are sending you a copy of the Jackson R<sup>d</sup>port on the Geology of Maine which contains a picture of Skowhegan Falls. If you prefer a photo-stat to a photograph of this picture we can arrange to have one made for you.

Thank you very much for the information about the Michaux item. It is very interesting; I envy you the Michaux books.

In regard to your books. We have in the general lending library Canal Projects on the Kennebec, History of the Women's Club of Skowhegan, Kate Furbish, Passage of Arnold's Expedition through Skowhegan, Skowhegan on the Kennebec, Trees of Coburn Park, Kennebec, and The Flora of Birch Island. In the Maine Author Collection which, as you know, is an exhibition collection, the books not available for loan, we have only Canal Projects on the Kennebec and Skowhegan on the Kennebec, so we should like to have autographed copies of as many of the other items as you have. I wish that I might have for myself a copy of the Trees of Coburn Park. I like it so much. I have been to your beautiful park a number of times and it invariably adds to my pleasure when I am there to recall your charming brochure about the trees.

Very truly yours,

MCF

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MISS LOUISE H. COBURN  
SKOWHEGAN, MAINE

Dec. 7, 1932

My dear Mrs. Fuller:

I am pleased that you have been interested in the chapters of my history. You refer to the travels of Michaux. I have put in at some length in the next chapter of my history an account of his journey up the Kennebec, and enclose this, which, as it is a left over piece of old copy, you need not trouble to return. I have his set in three volumes of North American Sylva, a description of the forest trees of the United States, Canada and Nova Scotia, translated from the French. Vol. 1 printed in Paris by C. D'Hautel, 1819. Vol 2 printed by the same, 1818, and my third volume is entitled 6 half, printed in Paris, 1819. These are in original pasteboard bindings. My quotations are from the introduction in the first volume and ~~and~~ from the ~~White~~ Pine in the third volume.

I think you wrote me some time ago that you would like to complete your set of the Maine Naturalist. If you will send me a note of just what volumes you have, I will be glad to send you the remaining numbers that have been issued.

I think I have sent the library the pamphlets I have had printed, but if you want to look it up and see if you have them, and if you would like a second copy of each, and would like them autographed or not, I would be glad to send them. They are the Arnold Expedition, Canal Projects, Trees of Coburn Park. Also my book of poems Kennebec. I can send you second copies of all if you want them.

Would you be kind enough to tell me if Mr. Moulton is still State Librarian. I am not sure even if he is now living, but if he is I would be glad to have his name and address.

Sincerely yours  
Louise H. Coburn

~~and pastures full of pine stumps three and four feet in diameter. One of these was the field west of the Tilton house at the foot of Neil Hill.~~

The English Admiralty seems to have been much concerned about the white pine of Maine, and in 1711 and again in 1721 laws were enacted in Parliament forbidding any cutting of what was called "mast pine", except under authority of the Admiralty. This claim was disputed by the Kennebec Company on the ground that their charter was dated prior to the passage of the laws, and the dispute caused active correspondence between the company and the Admiralty for some years. Apparently Brit<sup>21</sup>/~~ania~~'s rule of the waves depended upon the salvage for her navy of Kennebec white pine. The Kennebec Company was continually concerned over encroachments on their land of illegal cutters. Under date of November 18, 1772, a letter came from the Company's office in Boston to Jonathan Oakes, ~~thanking him for information of~~ people lumbering and intending to lumber on the Company's land in his neighborhood, and requesting him to forbid in the Company's name all persons from lumbering on their lands, and if any should persist to get their names and evidence of their trespass, so that the Company might prosecute them without delay. Similar letters were sent later to Eleazer Spaulding and Joseph Weston, agents of the Company, often specially referring to "mast pine."

In 1807 the French Botanist, F. Andrew Michaux, Michaux the younger, in one of his scientific expeditions passed up the Kennebec as far as Norridgewock, and up the Sandy River as far as Farmington, and was specially interested in Kennebec White Pine. He mentions measuring near Norridgewock two trunks that had been felled for canoes, of which one was 154 feet long and 54 inches in diameter, and the other 142 feet long and 44 inches in diameter at three feet from the ground; also that he saw near Hallowell a stump exceeding 6 feet. He states

that on account of its durability the White Pine was chosen for the magnificent wooden bridges over the Schuylkill at Philadelphia and the Delaware at Trenton, and for those which unite Cambridge and Charleston<sup>w</sup> with Boston; that it served exclusively for the masts of the vessels constructed in the northern and middle states; that England before the War of Independence furnished herself with masts from the United States, and still depended largely upon this source, and that the finest timber of this species was brought from Maine, and particularly from the river Kennebec.

Michaud gives some details as to the methods of logging, and says that when he was at Winslow in August 1806, which was where the drive was held, the river was still covered with thousands of logs, of which the diameter of the greater part was 15 or 16 inches, and of the remainder (perhaps ~~was~~ one fiftieth) 20 inches. Almost all were White Pine, ~~the only species mingled with them being the Blue Ash and the Red Pine,~~ these not in the proportion of one to a hundred.

Michaud also states that the Red Pine was frequently employed in naval architecture, and was exported in planks to England from the District of Maine.

In the<sup>is</sup> forested country the only spaces open to the sky were the surface of the Kennebec, the Wesserunsett stream, a few ponds some distance from the river, and an occasional bog. In the heart of the present village there was a large bog, inhabited by cat-tails, and bordered by alders, which covered the slight depression of ground where the railroad station and freight buildings and Holt and Hight's store-house stand, extending from Russell St. to the southwest corner of Dr. Dascombe's lot, and from near Madison St., touching the street at several points, to near Court St.<sup>4-1</sup> A brook flowing out of it entered the river about where the Savings' Bank stands. This bog was gradually encroached upon by filling and build-

December 23, 1932

Miss Louise H. Coburn,  
Skowhegan, Maine.

Dear Miss Coburn;-

I find that I answered only part of your letter, which was not at hand when I wrote you. I thought I remembered all your questions but I find that I neglected to answer the one about Mr. Moulton. The State Librarian is Mr. Henry Dunnack; the State Historian is Mr. Augustus Freedom Moulton and perhaps it is he whose address you wish. It is 98 Exchange Street, or the Columbia Hotel, Portland.

We finally obtained the numbers of the Maine Naturalist which we lacked to complete our set; we now have two complete sets and find them extremely useful in reference work on Maine natural history. We have a few extra numbers; if we decide to have a third set bound perhaps you can help us make it complete. It may interest you to know that the books are very attractive little volumes of convenient size to use and lend.

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

By MCF

MISS LOUISE H. COBURN  
SKOWHEGAN, MAINE

Jan. 25, 1933

Dear Mrs. Fuller:

I am sending you today a package with the pamphlets and book you wrote me you would like for the Maine Author collection. I have included in it a copy of the Trees for yourself, to which you are very welcome.

I found a few other pamphlets, which I am sending, and which you may already have in the library. One is the Old Skowhegan, written by Lillian Smith, a talented Skowhegan woman, who passed away nearly twenty years ago. You may already have that.

Also two pamphlets written by my sister, Mrs. George Otis Smith, which you also may have in the library. If you have you can make, if you want to, some other disposition of these. My sister had several other pamphlets of which I do not have extra copies, but if you would like these others for the library and do not have them, I think I could obtain them.

Very truly yours,

*Louise H. Coburn*

January 26, 1933

Miss Louise Coburn,  
Skowhegan, Maine

Dear Miss Coburn;-

The package arrived this morning and we thank you very much for the pamphlets, the book and for taking the trouble to send them and autograph them for us. We are very glad to have the two items by your sister, and the sketch of Old Skowhegan by Lillian Smith. These were not in the library. I think that if you can obtain them for us without too much trouble we shall be very glad to have the other pamphlets by your sister, which you mention.

Thank you for sending me for myself a copy of your charming monograph on the trees of your park. I have always considered it an especially choice and lovely thing, ranking with the work of our best nature writers. I shall enjoy reading my own copy of it.

Very truly yours,

Signed MCF