

The following history of the Laura T. Davison Missionary Society is taken from old records, excerpts from Bernice Young's history done in 1964 and compiled to date by Liz Ritchie.

"Grateful to our Heavenly Father for the blessings of the Gospel which He has so richly conferred upon us; feeling that we are thus placed under great obligation to Him, and desirous to do something for the advancement of His glorious cause among those who do not enjoy these precious blessings, we agree to form ourselves into a society for the promotion of that object."

The first meeting was held September 10, 1874, in the first church built in Greenville with twenty-two members. The following meetings were held at the church, and in the homes of the members. These meetings, often times, went day long with a lunch at noon and quilting taking place in the afternoons. This was the only social function for years.

Services of the society could be secured for the afternoon and evening by paying ten cents for each person present.

The Constitution as of September 10, 1874:

Article 1 – This Society shall be called the "Greenville Women's Missionary Society Auxiliary to the Board of Missions".

Article 2 – The officers of this Society shall be president, directress, secretary, and treasurer, chosen annually.

Article 3 – The President shall preside at the meetings of the Society.

Article 4 – The Directress shall have the general oversight and direction of the affairs of the Society.

Article 5 – The Secretary shall keep a record of the meetings and doings of the Society.

Article 6 – The Treasurer shall keep an account of all money raised by the Society and of the disposal of the same.

Article 7 – The object of this Society shall be the collection of money for missionary purposes and the cultivation of a missionary spirit among its members.

Article 8 – All money raised by this Society shall be sent to the Treasurer of the Women's Board of Missions for the purpose of their organization.

Article 9 – Any person may become a member of this Society by affixing her name to the constitution and paying twenty-five cents annually.

Article 10 – The regular meeting of this Society shall be held on the second Thursday of every month. Other meetings may be called when deemed necessary by the members of the Society.

Article 11 – The meetings of the Society shall be opened by the reading of the Scriptures and prayer.

Article 12 – The Constitution may be altered or amended at any meeting of the Society by a vote of the majority of members present.

Mrs. Davison, after whom the Society was named, was an active president for forty years, and died March 22, 1918 at the age of ninety years.

Somewhere between 1918 and 1922 the name of the Society was changed from "Greenville Women's Missionary Society Auxiliary" to the "Women's Board of Missions" to the "Laura T. Davison Missionary Society", and still bears the latter.

Many of the meetings since the 1920s were opened by repeating Edwin Markham's Creed, as follow: *"Here is the truth in a little creed, enough for all the roads we go; in love is all the law we need; in Christ is all the God we know."*

The earnings of the Society were made primarily from the sale of aprons, laundry bags, clothespin bags and were stitched by the group. Also the "pass along sales" and "bake sales" were very popular. In 1982, the Thrift Shop was started by Beverly Macomber, which remained the Society's largest fundraiser.

These earnings were given out, almost exclusively to the Council of Churches. It has now branched out to include the Maine Bible Society, Bangor Theological Seminary, the Chinese Christian Church, the Heifer project (established by our own Rev. Robert Mayhew), Army Hanson Center, Good Will, Salvation Army, money donated to repair the Statue of Liberty given through the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1985, items prepared for the "time capsule" in 1986. Since 1987, kits have been prepared annually: June (layettes), July (sewing), August (school), September (health) and May was blanket month, where for \$5.00 a blanket could be purchased for the needy. The Society supports the Union Church, on a regular basis – not only monetarily, but also by purchasing needed items, and helping to make necessary repairs throughout the church. There are many other worthy organizations, which the Society has continued to support for years. The Society pays its share to the Maine Council of Church Women and observes the World Day of Prayer annually. Members and friends are remembered in times of stress with cards and flowers. Missionary programs, while regularly conducted by the members, occasionally have a guest speaker. This is followed by a social hour with refreshments. The meetings are closed with the Mizpah Benediction: "May the Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent one from the other".

In 1975 the dues were raised from .25 to .50, and in later years, the dues for the year were \$1.00.

It was interesting to note, in 1966, the President asked each member "to bring a china cup and saucer" to be left at the church.

Missionary always recessed for the summer months, starting up again in the fall.

In 1967 a visiting committee was started, which consisted of making a call in person or by telephone to some ill or shut in person. When a member of the circle "passed on to the higher life", three members were chosen to write resolutions of respect, as a memorial to this person and placed on record with a copy being sent to the family. Examples: "They never quite leave us; the friends who have passed through the shadows of death, to the sunlight above." "A thousand sweet memories are holding them fast to places they blessed with their presence and love."

In 1988 it was written in the records "It is getting harder each year to get officers to serve and to keep our organizations going as our active members are few, and no young people are joining". There are 10-13 regular members now, as opposed to sometimes 50 and 60 members in past years.

December 10, 1998 was the last recorded meeting. We have "no slate of officers", and are now under the guidance of the Church Council.

In the year 1999, the remaining interested members met for "social times" with brief meetings. Money earned through the Church Thrift Shop continues to support missions under the auspices of the Church.