



# Nobleboro History Lincoln County, Maine

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## **Nobleboro History - Low Cost Insurance for the Town Treasurer**

By George F. Dow

In 1839, Henry P. Cotton was elected treasurer and tax collector for the town of Nobleboro. He was not required to take out costly commercial insurance. However, he was required by state legislature "to give bond for the faithful discharge of his duty to the inhabitants of the town in such sum and with such sureties as the selectmen shall approve."

These details and the suggested wording of the bonding document are found on page 89 of a very useful, leather covered book, 4 1/2 to 7 1/4 inches, that is in the possession of the Nobleboro Historical Society. The title of the book is "The Maine Townsman, on Laws for the Regulation of Towns; with Forms and Judicial Decisions."

For Henry Cotton, in 1839, the bonded surety was set at \$6,000, requiring his signature and that of four other highly respected townsmen.

The official wording of the Cotton's bond, dated April 8, 1839, using the detailed legal jargon, was as follows" "Know all men by these presents that we Henry P. Cotton, of the town of Nobleboro in the County of Lincoln and State of Maine, as principal, and Ephraim Hall, Joseph Dunbar, John Chapman and Eliphalet Jones all of Nobleboro as sureties, are held and firmly bound and obliged to the inhabitants of the town of Nobleboro aforesaid in the sum of six thousand and dollars to be paid to the said inhabitants of Nobleboro aforesaid which payment well and truly to be made, we do hereby bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators firmly by these presents."

The bond further stated the good news that "if Henry P. Cotton shall faithfully discharge his duty as treasurer and collector then this obligation shall be void." Their signatures were witnessed by Albert S. Hall.

In those early years, the selectmen did not have typewriters, computers, or much clerical help. But they did a grand job in preparing hand-written documents, using all the details of legality.

We are indebted to Jacob Chapman for preserving Cotton's bond, along with many personal receipts and town records. Chapman himself became Town Treasurer and Tax Collector in 1841 and 1842, as reported in our articles of March 4 and 18.

Among Chapman's papers were also interesting details of the amount of state funding in support of town programs. For the year 1841, the town of Nobleborough would receive state funds of \$185.05 for primary schools, and \$86.50 for the militia. For the next year, it was \$146.61 for schools, and \$86.90 for militia.

Our history files contain very little information about Nobleboro's militia - other than their being called out during the War of 1812 to serve in defense of the seacoast. However, an old law book, published in 1848 provides details for the volunteer militia. The men enrolled for a term of seven years; reduced in 1848 to five years. (If there were insufficient volunteers, others could be drafted). Each company was required to hold an annual parade, inspection and review on the last Wednesday in May at 1 p.m. A second parade day also was to be held in September, at a time and place deemed expedient. (Other legislation called for parades on the second Wednesday in May and at two other selected times).

Evidently, the town was reimbursed with an annual contribution to cover costs of equipment and supplies.