

# Waterford Echoes

Volume 9 Number 1

Spring 1990

Waterford Historical Society

## THE HALE LILACS

by Elizabeth Mason Carter

In Elm Vale Cemetery, South Waterford, are the graves of Oliver Hale and his family. Oliver, a native of Harvard, Massachusetts, was married twice, first to Eunice Fletcher, and after her death, to Elizabeth Newton. He had several children. According to 1797 tax rolls their home was on land designated L4 R5. He prospered although when he arrived the story went that he brought all his worldly goods on an ox yoke suspended on his own shoulders. The family from which he came in Massachusetts was considered a good one, educated and well off.

Three daughters married Bethel men. Eunice married Charles Mason October 30, 1823 and moved to a simple home on the old Route 26 now known as Sunset Road. Charles died the following April as the result of an accident. Eunice, who was pregnant with their first child, returned to her parents in South Waterford where the baby was still born. Both Charles and this infant share a grave in Riverside Cemetery, Bethel among the older members of his family.

Two years later, Eunice who had often visited her Bethel sisters, married her late husband's brother Ayers on January 9. They moved into the new Federal style home on the knoll near the Androscoggin River, and to which Eunice brought some antique furnishings from her family home. Ayers was very successful in timber operations, becoming one of the largest owners of wildlands from the Swift River Valley beyond Rumford to Weld, as well as nearby New Hampshire and in Bethel.

They became parents of five children, two daughters and three sons, all of whom resided on marriage in Bethel. William married Hepsibah Kimball of Bethel in November 1865, following the death of his mother in July. They had three sons and a daughter. One son, Herman, continued to live on the family farm and brought

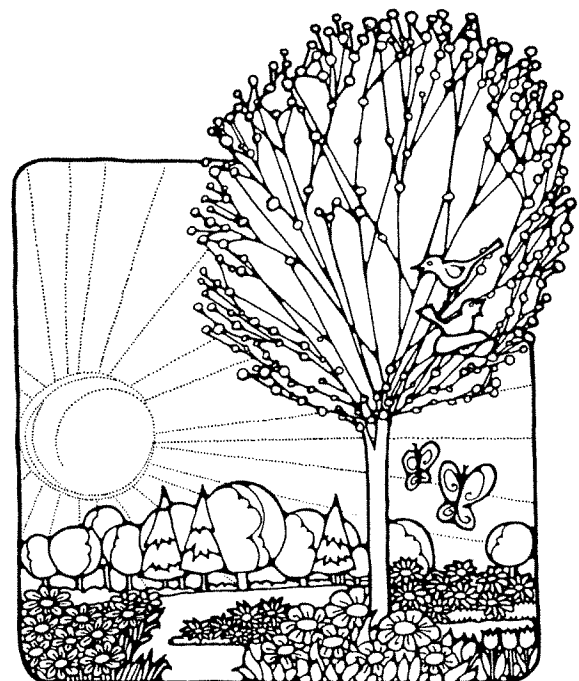
his wife, Pauline Dodge of Topsfield, Mass, there to live following their June 27th wedding in 1906.

When Eunice moved to this home, now known as Sunset Farm, she brought roots of lilacs from South Waterford. These were said to have been brought there by Oliver from the Hale home in Harvard, Massachusetts. Many lilacs are still growing in that town which seem to be the same variety in color and fragrance.

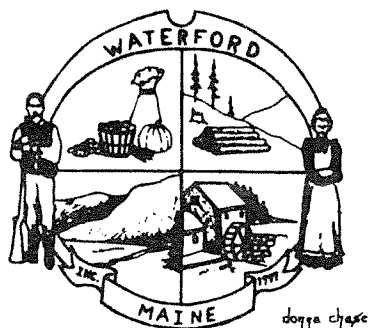
Eunice's lilacs grew into a large hedge which gave great pleasure to three generations of Masons. In October 1943 the Herman Masons moved to West Bethel and thoughtfully brought roots from the cherished Hale bush to the home there.

William Mason lived his entire life at Sunset Farm. He had agreed to care for both parents until their deaths.

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## FOR SALE



6" square tile includes cork back, hanger and gift box. Sepia on tan background.

\$3.00 plus .5¢ sales tax

4 1/8 x 5 3/8 notecard with envelope  
Package of 10 - \$2.50 plus tax

Available at local stores and Town Office

Ayers lived twenty-five years longer than his wife. Eunice and Ayers are buried at Woodland Cemetery on the Songo Pond Road leading out of Bethel.

At Memorial time, William carried Hale lilacs to his parents' graves, to Elm Vale to decorate his Hale in-laws' resting places as well as that of Charles Farrar Brown (Artemas Ward). Friends since early childhood; he had enjoyed exchanging letters during all of Brown's travels. When Herman was old enough he accompanied his father on Decoration Day and following his father's death he continued the custom. His only child, Elizabeth, still carries on the tradition of bringing lilacs back to South Waterford.

While the present owners of the Ayers Mason-Eunice Hale home confessed to no special love of lilacs they do have a small hedge of the originals. Elizabeth Mason Carter has expressed the hope that they would keep them. On Vernon Street in Bethel at the formerly Gothic style residence of late Oliver Mason, there also grow some lilacs from Hale roots.

As nearly as the family could tell these lilacs are now over 300 years old and it is believed that the first roots came from England.

## SO YOU THINK WE HAD A BAD SPRING?

Business had not recovered from the depressing influences of the war before the famous cold seasons came on; these included 1815, 1816, and 1817. Of the three 1816 was the coldest. On the 26th day of May, 1816, snow fell to the depth of eighteen inches, and for a day or more the sleighing was good. An aged man present tells me that he chopped wood all day in June with his coat on, the snow lying in squalls about him. June 7th, 8th, and 9th it snowed and ice formed thick as window-glass, while the surface of the ground was frozen. During these three years no corn was raised in Waterford, or barely enough for seed. But little wheat or rye was raised at that time, so the people were in great straits for food. Rye was two dollars and fifty cents a bushel, and scarce at that; pork was a shilling or more a pound, and flour was twenty dollars a barrel. The Perleys and Ingalls of Bridgton raised a little corn during these cold seasons, so the country was not destitute of seed when the famine was passed. One man went from Waterford to Portland and bought a bushel of corn, which he brought home on horseback. There is a tradition that the poorest of the people boiled brake roots and ate them in milk, and that skim-milk cheese was eaten as a substitute for bread. A good deal of grain was hauled from Portland, but prices ruled high there, as the cold seasons affected all New England.

The superstitious thought the cold seasons were ominous of the end of the world, and fancied that they could see spots on the sun. Added to the sufferings for want of food was the calamity of fire. In 1817 a terrible fire swept through South Albany. No attempt was made to stop it, but only to ward it off the buildings. It burned over immense tracts of wood land and destroyed two

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## OF NOTE

Waterford Historical Society was incorporated on September 2, 1965. This makes 1990 our 25th anniversary year and we hope to hold an open house in August.

The Societies officers at the time of incorporation were:

President - Ober W. Kimball  
Vice President - Berkley G. Henley  
Secretary - Margaret M. Sawyer  
Treasurer - David G. Erikson

## 1989 MEETINGS

### FINANCIAL CONDITION OF TOWN LIABILITIES

the several school districts	\$ 291.89
Outstanding interest bearing orders	1,990.90
Interest on same estimated	100.00
Outstanding orders of 1888	426.50
Interest on same estimated	20.00
Outstanding orders 1889	636.07
Interest on same estimated	16.00
Town officers bills estimated	350.00
Due Maine Industrial School for Girls for board of Mary Small from Oct. 1, 1889, to Feb. 20, 1890,	15.00
..	\$3,846.36

### ASSETS

Cash in Treasury Feb. 21, 1890	\$ 3.98
Due from collector, 1888	203.52
" " " 1889	3,467.55
Due State Pensions	132.00
From Wm. W. Watson for timber	109.89
" A.S. Hapgood " "	9.00
" D.L. Merrill, wood	15.00
" F.M. Atherton, wood	7.50
" C.M. Billings, oats, 1888	4.00
..	\$3,952.44
Showing a balance in favor of the town	\$106.08

The preceding report contains a true statement of the expenditures and liabilities and assets of the town of Waterford for the year from Feb. 20, 1889, to Feb. 20, 1890.

L. E. McINTIRE, Selectmen  
H. A. JEWETT, of  
W. V. KNEELAND, Waterford

From the 1890 Town Report

Join the Waterford Historical Society. Check appropriate category and mail to R2 Box 508, Harrison, ME 04040

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBER CLASSIFICATION**

___ Life-Couple	\$75.00	___ Senior Citizen	\$1.00
___ Life	\$50.00	___ Student	\$1.00
___ Patron	\$25.00	___ Sustaining	\$2.50
___ Honorary	\$35.00	___ Contributing	\$10.00

**March 9** - The first meeting of the year held at Bear Mountain Inn. Jon and Diane Ray of Paper Chase in North Bridgton gave an interesting presentation on methods and styles of preserving collectable paper.

**April 13** - At the home of Oscar and Mary Andrews. We enjoyed a video tape of the Civilian Conservation Corp.

**May 11** - A pot-luck supper at the hall in North Waterford followed by a business meeting.

**June 8** - Following a pot-luck supper at the hall Ernest Knight gave a most interesting and informative presentation about Eli Longley who was a postmaster and merchant in Waterford and went on to Raymond in 1817.

**July 13** - Dick Denison of Norway was the guest following a pot-luck supper. Dick shared stories about Shavey Noyes and displayed some of his art. 23 members and guests present.

**August 10** - Another sumptuous pot-luck supper at the hall. Orpha Davis of Harrison charmed us with recollections of life in the parsonage when her father pastored the Waterford Flat church in the early 1900's. (The text of Orpha's presentation will be in the fall newsletter.)

**September 14** - Meetings continue to be held in the hall. Phil Denison of Harrison entertained us with his own special kind of humor. Words can't describe it - you had to be there!

**October 12** - Our final meeting for the year at the hall as well as our final pot-luck. We all shared remembrances of our school days. Of particular note was Richard Jones' claim that all the teachers he had are still living.

**November 9** - At the Wilkins House. Nancy Marcotte gave a most delightful and informative presentation on the Shakers.

**December 10** - We closed our 1989 year at the Wilkins House. Orpha Davis gave a brief seasonal reading and we were musically entertained by the Kaysers. Although their musical skills need no enhancement, their colorful costumes added to our pleasure. The evening closed with a carol sing-along with Marjorie Kimball at the piano.

### FOR SALE

The History of Waterford Maine 1775-1875, reprinted from an 1879 publication \$10.00, plus \$1.10 if mailed. Waterford, Maine 1875-1976 published in 1977, also \$10.00, plus \$1.10 if mailed. Both books are available from the Waterford Town Office, Mrs. Curtis Millett above Waterford Memorial School, and from the Waterford Historical Society, Waterford, Maine 04088, and L. R. Rounds & Co. store in Waterford Village.

barns. Finally all Waterford and Albany turned out and fought it. This fire was a providence in disguise, for the people cleared great tracts of land over which it had run, and sowed it with rye; the next year they reaped a most bounteous harvest, and the spots on the sun obligingly suspended growth.

This was the nearest to a famine ever known in northern New England. It is comforting to know that improvements in transportation make such a calamity today impossible.

From the 1775-1875 Waterford History

### OFFICERS 1990

President - Rev. Norman Rust  
Vice President - Oscar Andrews  
Secretary - Nancy Marcotte  
Treasurer - Mac Bean

No action was taken on trustees - Eva Bean will continue on program, publicity, and newsletter.

We are pleased to announce that Bob and Mary Ross have consented to host Rice Museum open houses coincidental with the summer breakfasts. This was so well received last year that it's good to be continuing what we hope will become a tradition. The Rosses also invite people to call or drop by if they would like to have the museum opened at other times for visitors.

**Waterford Historical Society**  
**Waterford, Maine 04088**