



Waterford Echoes

VOLUME XXI Number 1 (Issue 36)

Spring/Summer 2003

Waterford Historical Society



The Knight and Welch Garage in North Waterford was an active place in 1920. It was operated by William Knight and Mickey Welch. Today, the building is the home of the Grange. This and other photographs can be viewed on the Maine Memory Network.

Society publishing new book

by Nancy Marcotte

This summer the Waterford Historical Society plans the release of a book titled, "This Is Waterford."

A large format book with many fine photographs, this will be a complement to the two Waterford Histories which have been for sale for many years. The seeds of this idea came from a pamphlet edited and printed in 1913 by Thomas Hovey Gage, Jr., titled "Notes on the History of Waterford, Maine." It contained writings by Rev. Lincoln Ripley, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody and others about the talented people of Waterford, among them Mary Moody Emerson and Artemus Ward.

Waterford has long been blessed with talents of writers, poets and photographers, both native and "borrowed." Flora Hamlin Abbott, Charlotte Morse Fillebrown and Hank Burns have all written about life in these four villages. Photographers like Fred Johnson, George Adams and Bill Haynes have chronicled the beauties of the town.

Poet Jennie Snow Kimball penned

these words at the turn of the twentieth century:

IN SUMMERTIME

I know a place where fragrant pine trees wave
Their plumed tops to feathered songsters, high,
Where strains unchecked, and cadence of the breeze,

Blend in harmonious song to earth and sky,
Where the purple thistle and wild orchid bloom
Grace earth, and air with beauty's fragrance rare,
Where interlacing arch of green, around,
Shuts out awhile, earth's erst-while fret and care.

And, gentle as the whisper of a mother's prayer,
Is wafted along the soft, south breeze I know,
Fanned away are the remnants of despair,
The chilling breath of ice and frost and snow.

Heaven, in good time gives back our own again,
Though taken for a while our trust to prove,
So earth, aglow with balmy days, is seen,
With every trace of winter's chill removed.

Oh, soft and sweet the music of the air,
Come high the pulse-beats of our earth and sky,
And warblers' throats attune to praise and prayer,
Bless dreamer, or toiler as he wanders by.

In addition to her poetry, the reader

(Continued on page 4)

WHS joins Maine Memory Network

by Mary Ann Holme

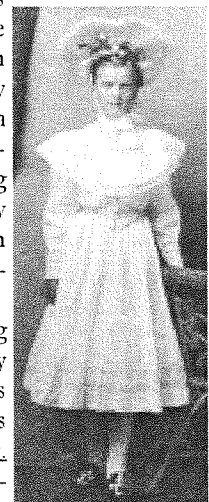
The Waterford Historical Society joined the Maine Memory Network as a contributing partner in October of 2002.

The Maine Memory Network is a statewide repository of electronic versions of Maine's historical source materials contributed by the region's historical societies, museums and libraries. The website was built and is maintained by the Maine Historical Society. Seed funding came from the New Centuries Community Program. Conceived as the online museum of Maine, the MMN grew out of the idea that the historical resources of our state could be shared through new technology.

MMN includes digital images of letters, journals, photographs, paintings, drawings, museums objects, broadsides, maps and sound and video files, all relating to Maine or New England. Digital images are input directly into the database by organizations across the state through their own Web browsers. Every time a user looks at a document in the system, the cataloging record will display contact information about the contributing partner.

As a contributing partner, we currently have 56 images online. The website is www.mainememory.net. To find our images click on the "search" tab, which takes you to the Search page. Type in "Waterford Historical Society" and our images will be brought up. MMN has

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Virginia Starbird, one of 56 images currently online.

In Memoriam

John R. Goodwin, 65, of Harrison, died Jan. 31, 2003 at Bridgton Hospital. He was born in South Waterford on Nov. 25, 1937, a son of Clinton S. and Dorothy Perry Goodwin. He attended school in Waterford and Norway High School. He had been employed as a dynamite caddy, a millwright and was a self-employed heavy equipment mechanic. He served in the U. S. Army during the Vietnam War as a field medic. He was a member of the St. John VFW Post in Harrison. He married Franziska Anna Schneider, who predeceased him. He is survived by a daughter, Christina Colleen Cook of Alexander, N.C.; his stepmother, Phyllis Stanton of Bridgton; half-sisters, Suzanne Hayward and Lorna Goodwin both of Bridgton, Sheila Brooks of Kittery, Cordelia Perry of San Miguel, Calif. and Gilberta Cunningham of Old Orchard Beach; half-brothers, Davis Crowell of Washington, Maine, and Willard Goodwin of Harrison; an uncle, Robert Perry of California. He was predeceased by a sister, Lorraine McCullough. He is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

Charlotte Elizabeth Longley Orr, 89, of Seabury Retirement Community in Bloomfield, CT, a **life member of the Society**, died Feb. 26, 2003. Born at home in Norway in 1913, Mrs. Orr was a 1935 graduate of Bates College in Lewiston, received a Masters degree in the teaching of English from Syracuse University in 1940 and certification as a teacher-librarian from Trenton State College in 1968. She was the daughter of the late Leon M. and Edna Sibley Longley. Her husband, James M. Orr, died on July 26, 1981. They were married in 1950. Mrs. Orr moved to Connecticut in 1995 after having lived in Pennington, NJ for over 40 years. Her career as a teacher, primarily of English and Latin, spanned 30 years and several states, among them Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts and New Jersey. She retired in 1977 after nine years as librarian at Hopewell Valley Central High School in New Jersey. Mrs. Orr was an active and devoted church member in both New Jersey and Connecticut and served many public causes. She was also a member since 1952 of the national philanthropic women's organization, PEO. She was a lover of poetry and a substantial portion of her childhood and adolescence was devoted to learning and publicly performing lengthy dramatic poems. Her favorite part of the world, and the place to which she returned every year was the Oxford Hills region of Maine. Her summer residence was a small cabin on Keoka Lake in Waterford, an area that her ancestors helped settle. She is survived by a son, Richard F. Orr of West Hartford, a daughter Priscilla O. Treadwell of Pennington, NJ; two grandsons and a granddaughter, Jamie and Libby Treadwell of Pennington, NJ. A family burial service was held in New Jersey on Feb. 28.

Christine M. Burnham, 89 of Naples and formerly of Waterford, a **life member of the Society**, died Friday morning at her residence. She was born in Sweden, a daughter of Denis and Hazel Millett Gardner. Mrs. Burnham graduated from Bridgton Academy in 1932. She married Edwin M. Burnham of Naples. He died in 1985. She was also predeceased by a son, Edwin G. Burnham. For the past 14 years, she lived with her grandson, Christopher and his wife, Shiho. Mrs. Burnham's employment career entailed many interesting jobs which included selling books door to door, real estate sales and most recently, manager of the Flight Deck Restaurant in Naples. She was a member of the Naples Grange, Naples Historical Society, Naples Methodist Church, and the Songo Garden Club. Surviving are a son, Paul Burnham of Lomita, Calif.; and four grandchildren.

Seward Blanchard "Pat" Brewster, 75, died on April 10, at Maine Medical Center due to complications following an automobile accident. An attorney and founder of Pine Tree Legal Assistance, he was born in Newton, Mass., in 1927. Between 1946 and 1947, he served in the U.S. Army where he was stationed in South Korea. He graduated from Kimball Union Academy in 1944, Dartmouth College in 1950, and Harvard Law School in 1955, the same year he married Carol Whitham of Ridgefield, Conn. He was a teacher and coach at Deerfield Academy before entering law school. He began the practice of law in Worcester, Mass., with the law firm of Myrick, O'Connell, DeMallie & Lougee. In 1961 he moved to Maine with his family to join the legal department of Central Maine Power Company in Augusta, where he served as general counsel from 1969 to 1984. He then served as a staff attorney and hearing officer for the Public Utilities Commission until his retirement in 1994. In 1966 he founded Pine Tree Legal Assistance, a non-profit organization providing legal services for those in need. Over the years, he chaired the Kennebec Valley YMCA board of directors, served on the Maine Peace Action Board in Portland, and volunteered at the Pine Tree State Arboretum. He was one of the founders of the University of Maine at Augusta Senior College in 2002 and a member of its board of directors. He had a lifelong association with Birch Rock Camp, a boys camp in East Waterford, where he was a camper, counselor, Maine Guide and longtime board member. One fellow board member described Pat as the "embodiment of the camp motto: 'Help the Other Fellow.' He will be remembered for his patience, strength, quiet courage and gentle kindness." He is survived by his widow, Carol of Manchester; two sons, Seth of Cape Elizabeth and Toby of Concord, N.H.; and seven grandchildren. He was predeceased by a son, Ben.

Robert C. Dyer, 88, died April 25 at Norway Rehabilitation and Living Center. He was born on Dec. 21, 1914 in Brooklyn, NY. His parents were Percy Allen Dyer and Alice Clayton Dyer, both natives of Portland. They moved from Portland to New York to take advantage of a job offer Percy had from the General Electric Company. They lived in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn, an area popular with New England transplants, where Bob was born. Bob always liked to refer to himself as an out-of-stater by accident of birth. When Bob was 10, the family moved to Ridgewood, NJ. Bob graduated in 1933 from Ridgewood High School. He attended Tufts College (now Tuft University) for two years before moving to Texas, where he lived for three years, ultimately going to work for the M.W. Kellogg Company, an engineering firm specializing in the construction of oil refineries. In 1939 he returned to New Jersey. He

and Rosemary Farr were married on Aug. 31, 1940 in New York City. The next few years were interrupted by Army service in World War II. He was discharged in 1946 with the rank of Captain. He returned to the Kellogg Company, then left to start a business of his own with a group of friends. This business prospered under the name of Reed-Lane in the field of pharmaceutical packaging. In 1972, Bob sold out his interest and retired to Maine. He and his wife first settled in Harrison, then built a house in Waterford in 1976. Bob took an active part in municipal and state affairs, serving on the school board of SAD 17 for two terms, and as a member, then vice-chairman, of the former Maine Health Systems Agency. He also served as the director of planning for the Northern Cumberland Hospital, now Bridgton Hospital. In the early 70s he was town manager of Harrison. He is survived by his wife of Waterford; his daughter, Alison of Rockland; two sons, Matthew of Augusta and Samuel of Bowman, S.C.

Carolyn S. Tingley, 82, a resident of Albuquerque since 1950, died March 26, 2003. She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Cedric O. Tingley; sons, Greg, Jeff, and Brad Tingley; daughters, Deni Massey, Marcy Kasten and Daryl Luthy; all of Albuquerque; 17 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. For more than 40 years, she was an active member of Beta Sigma Phi, currently with Upsilon Master Chapter. Mrs. Tingley was a member of First Congregational Church since 1954. She was also an active member of the Lew Wallace Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She was a direct ancestor of Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island, where Carolyn was born and raised. Mrs. Tingley helped with Project Share making food for the homeless. She helped with Beta Sigma Phi found All Faith's Receiving Home. Mrs. Tingley was voter registrar and judge for elections. A summer visitor to Waterford for decades, she was predeceased by her sister, Alice Schuster Rounds, in 1983 and a brother, William C. Schuster.

The Historical Society would like to thank the generous people who make donations to the Society. Donations are gladly accepted at any time.

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Angela Wiseman
Gordon and Helen Davis
Hank and Andy Burns

Other

Pearl Starbird
Dorothy D. Adams
Janet M. Bodwell

Waterford Echoes

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The Waterford Historical Society newsletter is published to benefit its membership. The Society, founded in 1965, is a non-profit Corporation created for the purpose of preserving and making available to persons interested, any and all historical and other material that shall be deemed valuable and worthy of preservation, in an effort to perpetuate for this and future generations, events, customs and traditions of local history, past, present and future, and to make possible the diffusion of such knowledge.

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MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

Life member	\$150.00
Annual	\$10.00
Annual - Seniors (65 & over)	\$3.00

Send checks to: Waterford Historical Society
PO Box 201
Waterford ME 04088

Dues payable by July of the year
Annual membership cards available at meetings

Purchase a pair of Waterford histories for \$20.

President's Column

We are now into our 2003 season with two meetings and two very interesting programs behind us. The April program on historical buildings in Waterford presented by Cynthia Hamlin and David Sanderson provided a unique glimpse at our community's past through its many historical buildings.

At the May meeting we all got a

chance to sing songs from the early 1900s, which brought back memories. David Sanderson played a number of old records on his wind-up phonograph. Thank you Cynthia and David for the fine entertainment.

Due to a self-imposed term limit, I will be leaving the post of president this month. I'd like to thank the Trustees for

their support and hard work this past year. I look forward to the ideas and inspiration a new president will bring to the Society.

Waterford is certainly fortunate to have such an interesting past and through the efforts of many volunteers, we learn more about it at every meeting.

Mac Bean

Waterford Power and Light Co. in the twenties

(Continued from page 8)

in 1922 when additional stock was issued to raise another \$5,000.

To provide street lights for the "City" in the south and Flat, the Waterford Village Improvement Association was formed in 1921. Laurence Rounds was elected president, Fred Haynes vice president, Amy Hubbard secretary/clerk and Flora Abbott treasurer. Directors were Charlotte Fillebrown, Frances Green and Albert Hamlin.

From installation until after World War II, a human had to be responsible for turning the switch. Originally, the lower half of the Flat was turned on at W.W. Fillebrown Company Store (my father) next to the library. When the store closed, the switch was moved to

the Fillebrown home next to the Masonic Hall. For the upper half of the Flat, the street light switch was in Rounds Store.

This arrangement kept tabs on the Fillebrowns and the Rounds. If the lights

eat last night?" Many times the lights were left on all day and it wasn't realized until it was time to turn them on at night.

It seems that most towns and cities were more concerned about lighting their streets than their homes. Some were wary of electricity while many could not afford the approximately \$130 it cost to wire a home with knob and tubing wiring. A good day's wage was \$2 at that time. Records show that it cost \$183.74 to wire Carl Hamlin's house on Coolidge Hill.

Edgar "Ned" Stone, my great uncle, was treasurer and manager. I remember him coming



Horse-drawn hay wagons move up Main Street in the Flat in the 1890s.

came on late, comments like, "You were a little late getting home last night," were heard. If the lights came on early, someone might remark, "Got invited out to

around in his truck to read the meter. He resigned Oct. 20, 1931 and E.H. Maxey became the clerk. Stockholders voted Oct. 30 to change the principal office from Waterford to CMP headquarters in Augusta. CMP officially acquired Waterford Light and Power on July 31, 1935.

Next time, Waterford's telephone and water.

WHS joins Maine Memory Network

(Continued from page 1)

tried to make searching for images as easy as possible by allowing users to search using the following tools or lists:

- Advanced Search - Allows users to enter keywords or phrases, and also narrows the search by county, item type and year.
- Clickable map of Maine - Allows users to select specific locations.
- Themes - Items related to a specific theme by keyword or through a theme list.

- People - Items related to a specific person by keyword or through a list of people.
- Events - Items related to a specific event or through a list of events.
- Collections - Items related to specific collections.
- Manuscripts - Items related to a specific manuscript.

The Maine Memory Network is a great way to share historical collections and information. Visit the website to take advantage of this valuable resource.

Society's new book

(Continued from page 1)

will find Marjorie Kimball, Charlotte Longley Orr, Virginia Cutler, Beatrice Fitts, Nancy Marcotte and David Sanderson among the literature in "This Is Waterford." As this newsletter goes to press, the book is in the same state. It is hoped it will be for sale beginning with the 4th of July.



SECOND SAD 17 VOTE HELD

(1965) A move to rescind an Oct. 18 vote which approved Waterford joining SAD 17 was soundly defeated Thursday evening.

Voting against changing the original vote were 119 citizens with 84 in favor. The original vote for joining the district was 79-74.

Other articles relating to the school issue were passed over Thursday because the change vote did not go through.

The second special town meeting in less than three weeks was held in spite of advisements that the original vote would not be affected. It provided for one of the biggest turnouts in recent years with 203 total ballots cast. There are 465 registered voters in the community.

Waterford's share of the district has risen to 6.5 percent because of Hebron's decision not to join the district.

The huge crowd was a surprise to some who had felt many citizens who had voted in favor of joining the district Oct. 18 would not reappear after learning the opinion of the State Department of Education and the Attorney General's office. Both ruled the second vote would have no effect.

Thursday's turnout exceeded the first attendance by 50 votes with district proponents gaining 40 and opponents 10.

Norway and Paris residents will vote individually on accepting Waterford, West Paris and Oxford into SAD 17 Monday.

CHURCH RECEIVES BELL

(1964) The bell now in the steeple of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in South Waterford will be dedicated following its presentation Sunday evening at the church.

The bell, a gift from the Bear Mt. Grange, was moved from the Grange Hall two weeks ago by the R.K. Brown Co. on a large crane.

Originally, the building now housing

the Grange where the bell has hung since 1944, was built by the Universalist Church Society. After the society disbanded, the building was used for a schoolhouse and the bell was used for the school. The bell was given to the church as a community project by the Grange.

Sunday evening at 7:30, Walter Hamlin, Master of the Bear Mt. Grange, will make the presentation through Arthur Sanderson, who will accept for the church. The formal dedication service will follow.

HOLTS HONORED ON 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

(1961) Relatives, friends and neighbors gathered at the vestry of the North Waterford Congregational Church Saturday during an open house to honor Mr. and Mrs. George A. Holt on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Mr. and Mrs. Holt were married on the last day of 1910 at the popular Rice's Hotel, North Waterford. Except for three years, they have always lived here, 42 of the last 50, in their present home.

Mr. Holt has always been a spool turner, starting in the trade soon after leaving the North Waterford school. His first job was at the wood turning mill in Albany owned by Elliott and Bartlett.

In those days a half century ago, he operated the spool turning machine by hand and was able to produce 150 gross of the small spools on which thread was wound.

George moved away from North Waterford for a few years after the spool mill burned. He worked at Bryant Pond, Locke's Mills and Andover, then moved back to his home town in 1918 when Harry Brown built the North Waterford spool mill. He remained at the same plant for 42 years.

He has seen the old hand-operated machines disappear to be replaced by automatic machinery. Today he operates a pair of machines and turns out 400 gross of the spools daily.

Mrs. Holt, the former Mary Manning, taught school for three years. She gave that up to work in the spool mill as a stamper under her father, W.A. Manning, who was mill overseer.

VOTERS SWEEP THROUGH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

(1962) The second largest crowd ever to attend a town meeting here swept through the 72-article warrant in just 80 minutes Saturday.

This speed came in spite of increased appropriations, which will send the present \$74 tax rate to \$84.

State Sen. Harold S. Pike as moderator said it was the shortest session in memory. As the veteran moderator read each article, a motion was immediately made, seconded and carried by a show of hands.

There were no contests and each incumbent was returned to office: Mrs. Louise Hodgkins, town clerk, treasurer and excise tax collector; Mrs. Margaret Sawyer, selectman for three years;

Earl Libby, tax collector for his 24th year; Raynor Brown, school committee for three years; and Bertram Millett, returned as road commission for his 28th consecutive year.

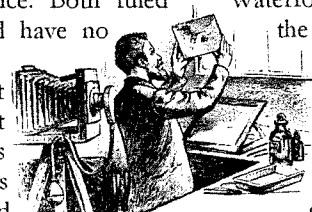
Voters approved appropriations totaling \$83,750, or about \$9,000 above 1961. Schools caused the biggest increase with \$28,000 for secondary school tuition, a jump of \$6,000; and \$15,050 for common schools, an increase of \$1,050.

Because of salary increases for the superintendent of schools and newly created office of registrar of voters, the appropriation for town officers salaries jumped \$500 to \$3,700.

The amount raised for support of the poor was \$500 less than last year and the \$10,000 appropriation for winter care of roads was the same.

Town officials said the large turnout stemmed from moving the meeting from Monday afternoon to Saturday afternoon.

For the first time in many years, the Ladies Aid of the Congregational Church didn't serve a noon dinner at the Wilkins House.



Remembering Peterville: East Waterford 100 years ago

By David Sanderson

Seeing the renewed activity at the East Waterford store, I thought to supply a few odds and ends about the village's past. The current store building almost certainly dates from 1911. I am told that the earlier store building burned in 1910. You will note in the accompanying photograph, which is very likely from August 1911, that the building shows signs of being recently constructed, with a new-looking porch and incomplete backfilling around the foundation.

At that time the spot was Peterville. There was North Waterford, the City, the Flat and Peterville. It was Peterville because of Peter Haskell, whose sawmill operation pretty much dominated the place. The Warren history tells us that the first mill was built in 1809, by one Jedediah Cailiff. Like all of the mills in town, it passed through several ownerships, and fell into the hands of Peter Haskell some time after the Civil War. Peter settled next to the mill and produced several children, who variously became Postmaster, built a grist mill started a chair factory, and generally formed the population of the village. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, that spot was firmly Peterville, and it remained so for several decades.

The mill itself was converted to steam and ended up being run by Henry Rolfe, Peter's son-in-law. When it burned to the ground in November 1911 it was "Rolfe's Mill." By the 1930s, Joe Haskell, Peter's son, owned it and there are folks around today who remember when Joe was running it.

It was derelict after World War II and dismantled by the 1950s.

East Waterford's contribution to culture

was the large hall that stood on the east side of the mill pond. This was almost certainly "Pride's Hall," used for dances, plays and similar occasions from some time before 1900 until about World War II. These occasions were often substantial, and might begin with a play produced by local people, followed by the inevitable oyster supper, then a dance. My grandfather Burton's diary records a

dance that saw him arrive home at 2:30 a.m. My great uncle Arthur San-

derson recalled returning from dances at North Waterford when dawn was breaking.

Changing population patterns brought the schoolhouse to East Waterford in 1896, where it still sits, converted into a residence. It was originally at Gambo, on the left just past the right hand bend in Route 37 as you travel past the Post Office towards East Waterford. The built-up earth site where it was is still visible. This move was, of course, accomplished with oxen and ingenuity — judging from the Town Report there were probably at least five teams of oxen. The \$8.50 paid to my great-grandfather, Leroy Sanderson, probably represents several days work by man and team.

We judge this by the fact that the usual pay for highway labor was \$1 a day. The town was divided into high-

way districts and the men in each district took care of road maintenance. That is what was go-

ing on when the photo of the gravel bank was taken. Leroy is on the left, behind the dump cart; his matched team of Morgans were called Lion and Prince and he was immensely proud of them.

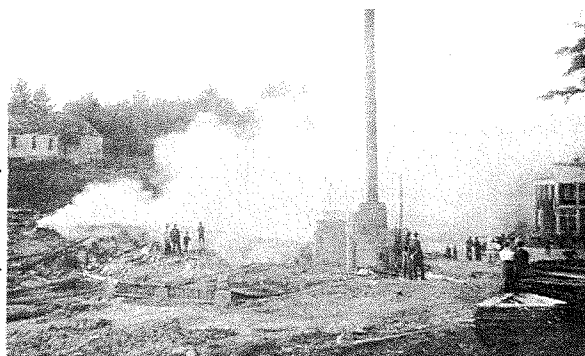
Others in the photo remain unidentified nor is it clear just when it was taken, though it must date from somewhere between about 1900 and 1910. Note the telephone line passing through the picture, which suggests that it is later rather than earlier. The gravel bank was next to what is now Route 37, about a tenth of a mile from the Route 118 junction, on the



Looking east in August, 1911, three months before the fire.

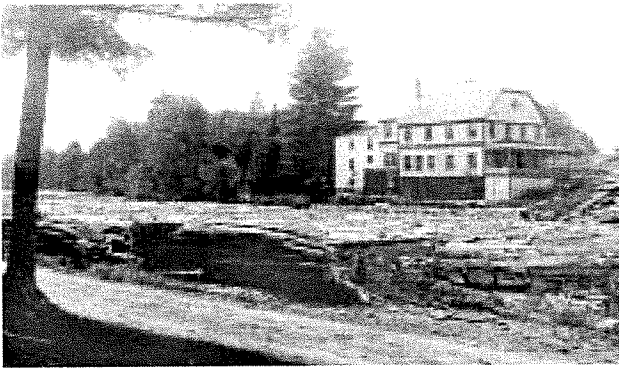


The mill pond is shown filled with logs in 1911.



The ruins of Rolfe's Mill in November, 1911.

left. Its edge is still visible through the trees if you look closely. It was opposite a small mill that seems to have been a grist mill, later a cider mill, and finally “Fogg’s



Prides Hall alongside the mill pond in 1911.

Boat Factory” by the late 1940s, though I do not recall any signs of anyone building any boats there when I passed it as a small child. The stones of its foundation and dam can still be seen, overgrown now by vines in the summer.

Electric Trolley Service

The school house was moved just prior to The Great Railroad Scheme, which was to bring electric trolley service from Norway to Waterford and Stoneham. Both the Norway and recent Waterford histories discuss this plan, which went somewhat spectacularly awry when the Italian laborers brought from Boston weren’t paid and lost patience. They took hostages, who escaped after there was a near-battle with police. When calm returned the Italians had returned to

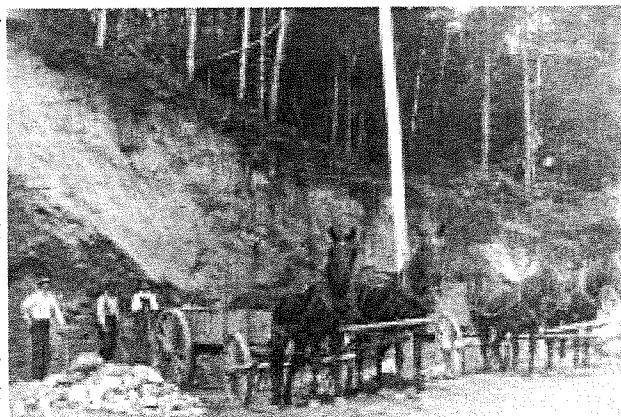
Boston, and the railroad had returned to limbo.

What had been accomplished was to construct part of the right-of-way; and if you look half-way up the bank

opposite the site of that gravel pit you will see one of the remaining pieces

of it, a narrow shelf about half-way up that looks about wide enough for a walking path. You can follow this from Rice’s Junction to East Waterford, where it disappears

across the brook behind the store. Older folks can remember when it was visible nearly to Gambo.



Workers load wagons at the gravel pit along Rt. 37.

As it happens, Joe Haskell dabbled at making maps. A couple of his efforts ended up in the hands of my grandfather, Burton. The illustration shows a part of one of Joe’s maps, East Waterford with the proposed railroad route on it. There is no date on this map. I suspect the 1930s, but have no proof. It is after 1911, because the corn shop (sweet corn cannery) at the Route 37/118 junction is shown. I have highlighted the right of way and added captions.

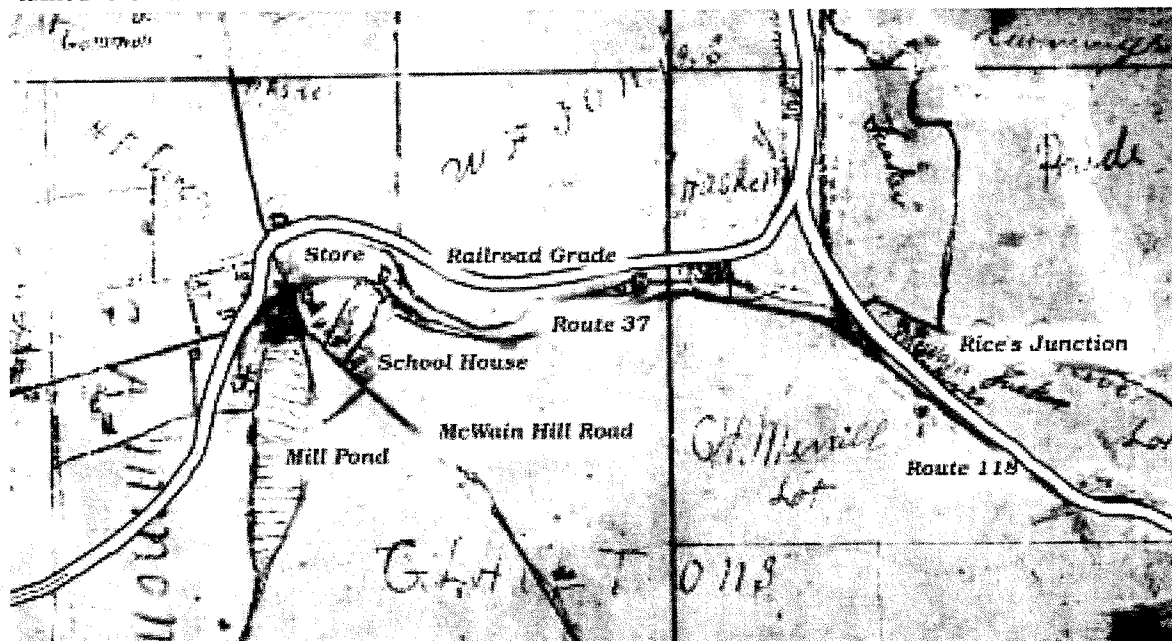
I gather that Joe was what might once have been called an original, considered foolish by some, but nevertheless quite functional in his own

mildly eccentric way, a variety of person who has always made life interesting in rural Maine. Burton always particularly enjoyed Joe’s

birthday gift to himself for his 80th birthday — a new bicycle. And those who have ever considered doing any

mapmaking will realize how much time and legwork must have been involved in creating the map reproduced here.

The photos reproduced here, and others, are being made available to the new owners of the East Waterford store, to copy and display there, a Peterville Gallery, of sorts.



Waterford Light and Power Co. - 1921-1935

by W. William Fillebrown

In this day and age, we have all become accustomed to throwing a switch for light, turning a faucet for water or pushing a few buttons to talk with someone across the state or the country. It hasn't always been that easy.

The Waterford Light and Power Co. flickered to life in 1920 and burned brightly for more than a decade before yielding to progress and the rapidly growing Central Maine Power Co.

Prior to 1887, the storage battery, electric motor, primitive arc light and other useful devices had been invented but put to little practical use.

Then came the "brush" lighting system, which was first used for commercial lighting in 1878 in Philadelphia, in 1879 in Cleveland and in 1880 in New York City. Edison

patented his first incandescent lamp in 1879. In 1885, alternating current was introduced into this country from Europe. It was received with so much concern over safety that several states prohibited its use.

By 1899, a number of small hydro electric plants supplied power to communities on the banks of Maine rivers. Those power plants were operated by local companies independent of each other. One of those pioneer companies

was Oakland Electric Light Co., organized in 1887 to provide street lighting for the community north of Waterville.

The company was sold in 1899, incorporated as the Oakland Electric Co. and chartered to do business in Oakland and Belgrade. It expanded to include other towns and in 1901, it was incorporated as the Messalonskee Electric Co.

On Jan. 25, 1910, the name was changed to Central Maine Power Co., the company that bought out all the cen-

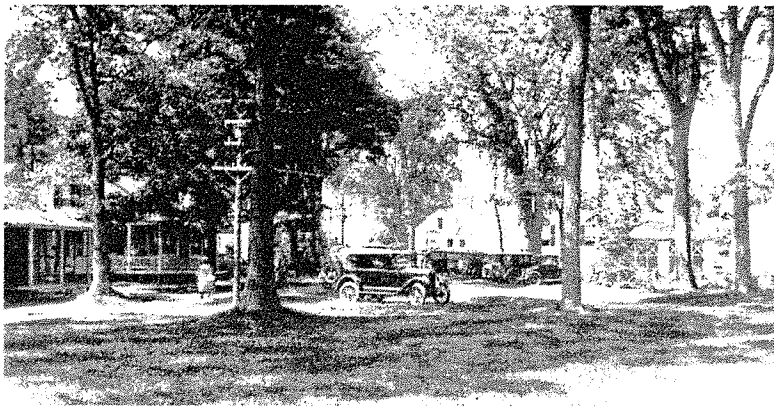
The system generated between 500 and 1,000 watts using a one-cylinder gas engine with large flywheels, the old "one-lungers." While far from perfect, the light that was produced was far better than a flickering oil lamp or candle.

By 1920, Harrison, Bridgton and Norway already had electricity and service was expanding. The man credited with bringing power to Waterford was Ernest Ward, president of the Harrison Electric Co. Among other things, he owned a business that wired houses. He was also secretary of the Portland and Harrison merchants cooperative associations, Justice of the Peace and mail carrier. His daily route brought him to Waterford, where he planted the idea.

By Nov. 19, 1920, 16 men had pledged to buy the first 40 shares of stock at \$25 each in the new Waterford Light and Power Co. Laurence Rounds was elected president, Walter Fillebrown treasurer and Guy Dudley clerk. Directors were Willard Abbott, Walter Hamlin, Edgar Stone, William Green and Ernest Ward.

The line started at the Bear River power station in Harrison and went up Tolman Road to South Waterford and the Flat. It is thought that the lines were extended to the east and north of town

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An early utility pole stands along the Common in the Flat about 1920.

tral and southern Maine power companies.

Waterford had alternating current before the power and light company was formed. Around 1916, several homeowners used a "Delco System," including Augustus Morse at the "Christmas House" and W.K. Hamlin at the South Waterford carding mill and Hamlin house.

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