



Waterford Echoes

VOLUME XXII Number 2 (Issue 39)

Winter 2004/2005

Waterford Historical Society

Nuances

by Nancy Marcotte

This will be a collection of impressions from the meetings and archives of the Waterford Historical Society, compiled by the secretary on a semi-regular basis.

The Waterford Historical Society meets regularly on the second Thursday of the month, from April or May until December, with the meetings being a time for a little refreshment, a little business and a lot of interesting information. Our programs in the past couple of years, under the direction of Cynthia Hamlin, have been particularly interesting. Cynthia spends a great deal of time sorting through the collections of the society, housed in four buildings in Waterford: The Museum in North Waterford; The Mary Gage Rice Museum, the old Town House and the Waterford Library. She likes to put things on display which come from our collection, so that people may see them. This makes the museum collections come alive for people who might not go to Open Houses.

We move the meetings in a regular circle of locations each year, so that the occasional attendee might have a pretty good idea where we will be. There is a calendar of events published each spring. Many of the meetings are at the Wilkins Community House, thanks to the graciousness of the Wilkins House committee. This is a delightful place to meet because it's comfortable, attractive and has plumbing. We always hold our Annual Meeting in June at the 1843 Town House, which is not comfortable and has no plumbing. This is when new trustees are elected. The nine to eleven chosen trustees of the society then elect officers by July. Recently we have adjourned the annual meeting to move to the Wilkins House for the programs in June.

The intention is to hold one meeting each summer at the North Waterford Hall, which holds most of our furniture,

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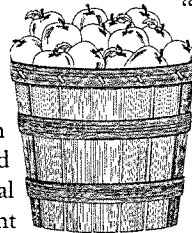


Elaine and Frank Morse explain the storage and shipping of apples to school children in this photo from the late seventies.
(Bill Haynes Photo)

APPLES, APPLES, APPLES

by Nancy Marcotte

In September 1952, Flora Abbott wrote in her Advertiser column "To The Folks Away And At Home" that "The Apple Annies have moved in on the Morse Orchards and, although this list may be incomplete, I will now divulge it with that understanding: Polly Skinner, Alice Marr, Phyllis Winslow, Doris Seiler, Evelyn Rogers, Mary Tipton, Gladys Niemi. Men working there, as far as I have them listed from South Waterford, are Albert Muller and Frank Bell." This was an annual rite, before the days of itinerant pickers, when the local women came to pick and pack apples. In the same way that women went to work in the corn cannery every fall, they would make money to pay the taxes, buy the Christmas presents and otherwise get their



families through the winter.

"The Lewiston Daily Sun," date uncertain, published the following article with the headline, "Morses in Waterford Work With Farm Bureau," subtitled: "One of Best Orchard Farms in Maine--Has Big Crop of Apples — Frank Morse Commenced More Than 50 Years Ago."

"An active member of the Oxford County Farm Bureau is Wilson M. Morse of Waterford. A visit to the Morse farm recently was worth while. . . This farm is a real example of what an orchard farm should be. We walked all through the rows of trees, probably some 2,000 of them, all in fine bearing condition. Frank Morse showed us many trees that he grafted 50 years ago, still growing big crops of apples.

"One of the interesting sights is to

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In Memoriam

Sandra M. Springer, 59, of North Waterford died June 8, 2004 at Central Maine Medical Center. She was born in Norway on March 18, 1945, the daughter of Chester and Barbara Trimback Millett. She was a graduate of Oxford Hills High School. She had been employed at Wilner Wood Products for 20 years and more recently as a store clerk at Kosi's in North Waterford. She married Robert "Bud" Springer Jr. on Oct. 15, 1965. She is survived by her husband of North Waterford; a son, Robert III of Woodstock; two brothers, Fred and Jeffrey Millett of North Waterford; two granddaughters; three step-granddaughters, a step-grandson, three great-granddaughters, an aunt and three nieces. She is buried in Pulpit Rock Cemetery.

June P. Starbird, 88, of Waterford died at the home of her daughter, Sonia Wilson, in South Paris on July 28, 2004. She was born in Norway on June 6, 1916, the daughter of Harold H. and Mildred Heath Howe. She attended grade school in Waterford and graduated from Norway High School in 1934. She was a certified nurse's aide working at Stephen's Memorial Hospital, Norway Nursing Home and Birch Rock Camp. She also worked for Morse's Orchards. She was a member and Deaconess at Waterford Congregational Church as well as a member of the Bible Study Group. She was a member of the Waterford Christmas Club. She just recently attended her 70th high school class reunion. She is survived by two sons, Brian and Richard, both of Waterford; three daughters, Sonia Wilson, of South Paris, Mary Anne Wilcox and Diane McKeen, both of Gorham; a brother, Paul "Bill" Howe, of Norway; a sister, Jean Grover, of Locke Mills; 15 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her parents; a brother, Ted Howe; a sister, Eva Record; an infant sister, Dorothy; a granddaughter, Catherine Gray; and an infant brother, Albert. She is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

Arthur G. Andrews, 89, of Naples and formerly of Bridgton, died July 28, 2004 in Bridgton. He was born in North Waterford on July 24, 1915, the son of L. Newell and Edith May (Palmer) Andrews and was educated in North Waterford schools. He married the former Sylvia Harmon on December 24, 1943. He was employed for many years at the Waterford Spool Mill and later retired from the Bridgton Knitting Mills after 19 years of employment. He is survived by his wife of 60 years of Naples; three sons, Richard Andrews of Sanford, Gary Andrews of Springfield, OR and Mark Andrews of Gorham; four daughters, Arthlene Winkley of Northboro, MA, Sharon Goldsmith of Harrison, Nancy Smith of Windham and G. Elaine Dunn of Scarborough; two brothers, Herbert Andrews of North Waterford and George Andrews of Zephyrhills, FL; one sister, Ida "Jennie" Rice of Norway; 16 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews. He is buried in Bisbee-town Cemetery.

Merritt M. Kimball, 83, of Waterford died July 29, 2004. He was born Oct. 15, 1920, at the Kimball Homestead in South Waterford, the son of Merton Davis and Hazel Sawin Kimball. At 16, he was the youngest person to obtain a fur buyers license in the state of Maine. He served in the U.S. Army in the Philippines during World War II. He was a trustee of Fryeburg Fair, a selectman for the town of Waterford for 12 years and past president of North Waterford World's Fair Association. He was a member of Mt. Tir'em Lodge in Waterford. He married Bertha Clarissa Hersey on June 17, 1939. They recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary with their family at "the farm." He is survived by his wife, of Waterford; five children, Davis W. Kimball, Annette K. Bennett, Elaine M. Kimball, Merritt S. Kimball and Winfield R. Kimball; 11 grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren. He is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

George Calvin Hamlin, 79, of Rumford, died Aug. 19 at Montello Manor Nursing Home. Born in Waterford, March 18, 1925, the son of Carl S. and Mina Jansson Hamlin. He graduated from Bridgton Academy in 1947 and the University of Maine in 1951 with a degree in civil engineering. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He worked for the Maine Department of Transportation from 1952 until his retirement in 1989. He was a member of the Mexico Congregational Church, the Rumford Square Dance Club and the Rumford Horseshoe Club. He married Marcia Stearns on Sept. 12, 1953, and they enjoyed over 50 years together. He is survived by his wife, of Rumford; three children, Paula Prevost, of Bolton, Mass., Susan Hamlin, of Lovell and Mark Hamlin, of Peru; two grandsons; and a sister, Nancy Coccia, of Port St. Lucia, Fla. He is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

June Brown Bachelder, 96, of Norway, died Aug. 27 at Market Square Health Care Center. She was born in Albany on May 1, 1908, where she grew up on a farm and attended the Dresser Rural School. In 1926, she graduated as salutatorian from Bridgton Academy and then from Farmington State Normal School in 1928. Her first teaching position was at the two-room South Waterford Elementary from 1928 to 1931. From 1931 to 1938, she taught in Norway and North Waterford schools. She married W. Graham Bachelder on Aug. 30, 1938 and they resided on several farms in Norway and Norway Center. In 1956, she resumed her teaching career in Welchville and Norway Elementary schools until retiring in 1968. She was active in

the Rebekahs, taught Sunday school in several churches, served as a 4-H Club leader and enjoyed The Barton Reading Club for several years. In 1964, she was elected to the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, an international honor society for women teachers. She was also a member of the Maine State Retired Teachers Association, the Oxford County Retired Teachers Association and the National Educational Association. She was an enthusiastic member of and secretary for the Twin Town Nature Club. She was a member of the East Stoneham United Church of Christ. She is survived by her children, Margaret B. Dutil, of Norway and Candace B. Cummings, of Waterford; six grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and several nieces and cousins. She was predeceased by her husband, W. Graham Bachelder on Oct. 4, 2001. She is buried in Hillside Cemetery in East Stoneham.

Irene J. Sanborn, 86, of South Waterford died Sept. 8, 2004 at Market Square Health Care Center. She was born in York on Dec. 5, 1917, the daughter of Herman and Miriam Brackett Johnson. She graduated from York High School and Farmington Normal School. She taught school for more than 25 years, retiring in the early 1970s. She married Paul Francis Sanborn in 1942, who passed away in 1982. She is survived by two sons, Jay and Dale, both of South Waterford; a daughter, Debora Gonyea, of Windham; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild; a sister, Fay Boardman, of York; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by two sisters and a brother. She is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

Arthur Coffin Jr., 66, of Waterford, died Nov. 20 at Bridgton Hospital. He was born in North Woodstock, Jan. 6, 1938, a son of Arthur and Gertrude Everett Coffin Sr. He graduated from Woodstock High School in 1957 and served in the US Army. Arthur had worked at Penley's in West Paris and Newton-Tibbetts. He also sold Raleigh Products. Arthur retired at an early age due to ill health. Survivors include his son, Michael, of Mt. Pleasant, N.C.; two daughters, Sharon Silver of North Conway, N.H., and Debbie Coffin of Troy, N.C.; three brothers, Fred of Waterford, Larry of Bryant Pond, and Robert of West Paris; one sister, Patricia Bean of South Paris; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by a sister, Joan Davis. He is buried in Lakeside Cemetery in Bryant Pond.

Nina M. Bisbee, 83, of South Paris, died Nov. 22, 2004 at Ledgeview Living Center. She was born in Waterford on Jan. 14, 1921, the daughter of G. Raymond and Grace Dearborn Millett. She attended Waterford schools and was a homemaker. She married Carl E. Bisbee on Dec. 14, 1940. She is survived by a son, Paul R. Bisbee of South Paris; a daughter, Linda Bisbee, of South Paris; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; three sisters, Maisie Murch and Eva Barker of Waterford and Gladys Emery of Mechanic Falls; and a brother, Ralph Millett of Waterford. She was predeceased by her husband on Jan. 13, 2000; a son, Keith; three sisters, Louise, Mildred, and Katherine; and two brothers, Elmer and Vern. She is buried in Riverside Annex Cemetery in South Paris.

Derwood H. Hill, 78, of Waterford, died Nov. 22, 2004 at Bridgton Hospital. He was born in Norway, July 31, 1926, the son of Hartwell and Alice Mitchell Hill. He attended school in Limerick and Norway. He was a union carpenter with the Local 538 in Berlin/Concord, N.H., retiring in 1982. He married Lelia Pike in 1946. He is survived by his wife of Waterford; a sister, Gloria Hill, of South Paris; two brothers, Donald of Litchfield and Albert of Waterford; three sons, Barry Hill of Norway, Dan Hill of South Paris and Scott Hill of Norway; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Nuances

(Continued from page 1)

business tools and larger artifacts. This building, along with the Town House and the Mary Gage Rice Museum (which holds smaller household artifacts and material culture), will be open at least twice a year—we intend to hold Open Houses each year on the second Sunday of July and August. In addition, much of our manuscript, ephemera and photography collection is accessible on line and in the Waterford Library year-round. Our president Fred Engdahl is acting curator of collections at the moment. The November meeting has often been a supper at the North Waterford Church and the December meeting we hope will be a holiday party at a member's home. Look for

newspaper announcements each month.

We have three nice books for sale and lately have been very much occupied with the preservation of collections and buildings. I don't know what we would do without Mac Bean, who keeps an eye on the buildings and tells us when it is time to paint the Rice Museum, redo the roof of the Town House, or fix electricity and build outside exit stairs at North Waterford (all of which have been part of our tasks for this year!) Mac does a lot of the work himself but this year Dan Drew has put new steel on the Town House roof.

In the summer of 2004, programs included a terrific look at vintage clothing in photographs and in historical time line. Cynthia Hamlin's grandchildren and other family members mod-

eled actual items from various collections. In the process, she took a look at our textiles and began a concerted effort to store them better. Cynthia has talked with Nancy Eaton, a textile expert in California and our former curator.

In June, the program was presented by Edward Holt, of Harpswell, who has presented Waterford Historical Society with a maple table from his family. The table is an unusual gate-leg adaptation, 48 x 44 inches with both leaves up. Della Holt Klement of Norway owned the table for a very long time; it had been her mother's (Annie Savin Holt). The legend of the table was that it had belonged either to the first woman in Waterford (Hannah Harrington Horr) or to the first girl child born in Water-
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Apple business once flourished in Waterford

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see the way hundreds of trees were saved from destruction by bridge grafting. These trees had been stripped of much of the bark by mice, and long scions were taken from the top and grafted at each end into the trunk below and above where the bark was stripped off. Another method that accomplishes the purpose of saving the trees is: small seedling trees were planted in the ground and one limb grafted onto the tree trunk. Thus by both methods the life sustaining sap is taken to the top of the tree from the roots, a remarkable piece of work.

"Among orchard men this Morse place is known (to be) where pests are controlled by two or three sprays each year . . . The reason is thorough spraying for many years . . . Wilson Morse does all the spraying and he is careful. The orchard is isolated from other trees that might be the source of pests. 'Last year the product of this orchard was 10,000 bushels; this year it will run somewhat over 5000 bushels. This shows how the farmer's income varies from year to year. Just as much cost to fertilize, to spray, to care for the trees, but a little less expense at picking time.

"The . . . apples are hauled by truck to the storage cellar under the barn. Years ago they quit the dairy business to go into orcharding exclusively. A long runway was built by Frank Morse from the doorway to the storage place. Trucks on the side of the frame are roller skate wheels; a slight push sends the loaded boxes to where they belong.

"One reason for the success of keeping apple is storage is to cool them down to below 50 degrees as quickly as possible after they are picked. 'Taking

the place of a big silo and an adjoining space beside it in the barn is a big ice house. This is filled to the brim every winter. There is not much use for a large quantity of ice on this farm except for the apples. At the side of the opening of the ice house is a platform elevator; several blocks of ice are loaded on this elevator and a truck outside pulls it up much as a hay fork is pulled up. This elevator can be used in taking the ice out. As the (apples) go into the storage place in September and October this ice is taken out; it is dumped through a chute in the floor and goes into the cellar. To make the ice melt more rapidly and thus cool the place, electric fans are used. Thus is modern ingenuity and machinery used to carry on one of the oldest kinds of business in agriculture. It is not possible to store all the crop in a normal year so some is sold at once and some put into other storage. . .

"The job of pruning apple trees is something that takes a lot of time. Every orchard man likes to have his pruning done with the least effort and expense. A sharp saw is necessary. After years of using a pruning saw Mr. Wilson (Morse)

got up one of his own, and has had some made. The feature is that the blade is of good steel so that it may always be kept sharp. It is necessary to cut off limbs of all sizes and in all sorts of awkward places. Mr. Morse made the blade moveable; a lever just beside the thumb, on the handle, moves the blade into several positions; this saves . . . time and labor . .

"This fine orchard place is matched with a fine set of buildings. A large two-story house, suitable for (two) families, is in fine condition, with every modern convenience.

"One of the first jobs of cooperation on this farm was the setting out of a Gregory Orchard. J. H. Gregory of Massachusetts . . . (offered) prizes for the best orchard management; this Morse (family were) the winners.

(Part of the article is obscured). . . (Morse is an) active cooperater with the Extension Service and the Maine Pomological Society. 'The 'big blow' struck this orchard along with a lot more. When it was over there lay on the ground 85% of the McIntosh; they had picked 200 or 300 of them. Cortland stood it much better, not over 45 to 50% falling. Baldwins 60% were blown off.

"A crew of 28 men, more than usual, were put to work picking up the fruit in three or four days. These are being held in the home storage until the bulk of the drops are off the market. The loss in dollars will be big.

"There was not a great amount of damage done to the trees; three or four 12-year-old McIntosh were blown. One of the stately elms in front went over, roots and all. Some of the old Baldwins were damaged.

"The total crop of apples is esti-



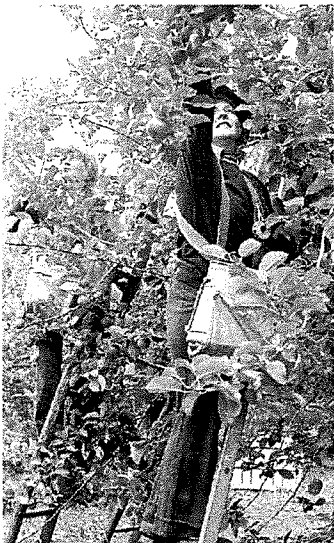
Will Haynes picks apples from his farm orchard in the photo from the late 1800s.



Tom Fillebrown presses apples for cider in 1982.

mated at 6000 bushels; 4000 of these being McIntosh."

This article was probably written in the early 1940s. Frank Morse, the senior, began a Baldwin orchard in 1865 ("more than 50 years ago") and the "big blow" of which it speaks was likely the 1938 hurricane. According to the article on the Morse Family in "This Is Waterford," the grandson Frank came to the farm in 1940 due to the illness of his father Wilson Morse; he became the third generation in the orchard business. At that time the farmhouse was expanded for two families and additional property was bought. (From "The McWain News." Frank Morse died in 2001.)



Sandy Weston picking macs.

There were other orchards, both big and small, in Waterford, notably the Chadbourne and Fillebrown Orchards. In 2004 the Advertiser-Democrat published an interview with Tom Fillebrown, son of orchardist Charles Fillebrown and grandson of Charlotte Morse Fillebrown. Tom talked about working the orchards:

"We had three. I sold two to developers and let my nephew have one. He's going to cut the trees down . . . the trees that are left are 50 years or more old now. About 30 is when they start to decline. "At one time we had around 2000 trees, apples, some pears and peaches. (The land was in the family) two generations. Mine was the second. My father started it in the late 1940s, after he came back from the (Second World) War . . . We raised some cattle, but just for our family. One year, I planted a lot of vegetables, but I didn't do it again. Everything came in at once and, with the fruit, it was a lot of work for the return.

"It was (a tiring way to make a living). People think it's just busy in the fall, but it's all year long, pruning, spraying--a lot of work, all year long."

Tom Fillebrown is now growing pick-your-own flowers on Plummer Hill Road and the family is out of the apple business.

APPLES FROM MAINE

poetry from WWII

Ten thousand miles away from home,
a soldier mutely trod,
While passing by a railroad track
with neither grass nor sod;
Strange men, he saw, unloading what
might be loss or gain,
And clearly read the stenciled words,
"Apples from Maine."

Such cheery scenes came to him,
he felt he'd like to hoot:
He stood upon a ladder now,
plucking ripened fruit;
He saw his father, driving the
big grays up the lane,
And knew the rack had in it
apples from Maine.

He saw his mother knitting
near the evening light;
His brothers and his sisters
gathered for the night;
A neighbor had come in to call
and talk was not in vain;
They mixed the conversation
with apples from Maine.

Nor were the days forgotten,
though a long year had sped,

When he and all the family
worked in the drafty shed,
To pack the orchard products
and make things safe and sane,
For buyers who had based their hopes
on apples from Maine.

He liked the officers and men
so comradely and true,
But, oh, how he would like to have
some orchard work to do;
To be high in the tree tops,
with view far o'er the plain,
A-gathering for the world to eat,
apples from Maine.

-Anna I. Parsons
(found in the scrapbooks)

One more Nuance from Nancy about apples: There came a time (during another wartime) when I was one of the "Apple Annies" at Morse's Orchard. My ex-Marine husband and I returned to Maine in 1972 and moved to Waterford with two small children. He went back to school and I went to work for Frank and Elaine Morse.



Orchardist Charles Fillebrown in 1982 at Fillebrown Orchards.

It was not easy, standing all day, sorting apples from cold storage, picking up as many as the hands could hold and deciding quickly whether they were good enough to go into the nests in cardboard boxes or into plastic bags for supermarket sales. I was very slow at first and used to dream I was sorting apples all night in my sleep. I have great respect for all the people who did that for many years and who continue to work with apples today. After all the work it takes to grow, pick and ship an apple, we should never take them for granted. In the 1970s the Bear Mt. Community Club published an updated version of its famous cookbook "What's Cookin'." In it were apple recipes, two of which I remind you of here:

APPLE SAUCE CAKE

(from Flora G. Abbott)

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter
1 cup sour applesauce
1 cup chopped raisins
1 tsp. soda added to applesauce salt, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg 1 and 3/4 cups flour. Add flour to applesauce mixture, then spices and raisins. Bake in moderate oven (!)

APPLE SPICE CAKE

(from Leslie C. Bradford)

3 and 1/4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
2 and 1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup butter or margarine
3 eggs
2 tsp. baking soda
1 and 1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
5 cups cored, pared, chopped apples 1 and 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350. Combine first 8 ingredients in large bowl, blend thoroughly (will be dry). Add apples one cup at a time, mix well after each addition.

Stir in nuts. Bake in 10" tube pan or Bundt pan, well greased, for 1 hr. 15 min. Cool 15 min., remove from pan. Add orange glaze, confectioner's sugar or whipped cream if desired. (Orange Glaze) Combine 2 tsp. grated orange rind, 1/2 cup orange juice, 1 and 1/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup water in small saucepan. Bring to boil, cook 10 min. (makes one-half cup).



President's Column

by Fred Engdahl

Some Thoughts from the President...

Another year is coming to a close and we, at the Waterford Historical Society, can look back on another season of interesting, informative programs presented by Cynthia Hamlin. I think all of us, no matter how long we have lived in Waterford, learn something new each time we attend a meeting. Moreover, I am constantly amazed at the passion of our membership in talking about or "getting into the record" the events of the past – the happenings that have helped to shape this community and make it the special place that it is. Please thank our Program Director, Cynthia

Hamlin, when you see her, on her outstanding efforts.

I encourage all of you to support the Society in two ways in the coming year so that your next president will have the tools to work with. Please make an effort to attend the meetings and bring a friend or family member with you to expose them to the work that is going on in the Society. We have averaged 31 attendees for the meetings in 2004 but we would like to see greater participation.

We ask, also, that you keep your dues current. The Board has voted a slight increase in dues to non-life members. We hope you will show your support by paying your dues for the coming

year. Dues currently run from July 1 through the end of June the following year.

In addition, we are looking for three additional members to the Board of Trustees. Trustees serve for three years and attend a monthly meeting where programs are planned out, the needs of the buildings currently in our care and acquisitions that are offered to the Society are discussed.

Please see any of the present Trustees if you would like to join us. Believe me, it is very rewarding experience that you will find very easy to immerse yourself in....

See you all in the Spring!

Waterford Christmas

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the entertainment a Christmas tree with gifts for all children was much enjoyed and refreshments were served. The entertainment was given under the direction of the teacher, Mrs. Minnie Sanderson, and all pronounced it one of the best entertainments of the year. The program is as follows:

Opening song, "Joy to the World," organ, violins, and chorus; recitation, "Welcome," Phyllis Bancroft; recitation, "Johnny's Christmas Gifts," Celia Gard-

ner; physical exercises, sixth and eighth grades; reading of the "Pine Tree League News," the school paper, Christine Gardner; music; "O Little Town of Bethlehem," organ, violins, and chorus; recitation, "Hilda's Christmas," Christine Gardner; play, "Tell Me Why;"

Boy, Charles Fillebrown; Girl, Agnes Bancroft; Christmas Fairy, Christine Gardner; Spirit of Christmas Tree, Celia Gardner; Christmas Angel, Virginia Tyler; Shepherd, Junior Rounds; Wise Men: James Tyler, John Hubbard, Frank Morse; Star, Barbara Fillebrown; Spirit of Christmas Bells, Thelma Bancroft; Santa Claus,

Gerald Gardner; closing song, "Holy Night," organ, violins, and chorus.

You will recognize some familiar names here, and those who knew these folks as adults will be pleased to imagine them performing there at the schoolhouse. Agnes Bancroft Lahti and Virginia Tyler Cutler are still with us here in town, though no longer performing in Christmas pageants.

And the school house itself is being carefully disassembled to be rebuilt as part of a home. It is an interesting building and well worth saving, for both its construction and its memories.

Waterford Echoes

Vol. XXII Number 2 Issue 39 Winter 2004

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.

2004-2005 OFFICERS

President:	Fred Engdahl
Vice President:	Malcolm Bean
Secretary:	Nancy Marcotte
Treasurer:	Karen Wright
Director/Curator:	Fred Engdahl
Program Director:	Cynthia Hamlin
Newsletter Editor:	Bill Haynes
Trustees:	Cynthia Hamlin, Henry Plate, Mary Andrews, Nancy Engdahl Lieselotte Willoughby, and Richard Jones (Trustee Emeritus)



MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION

Life member	— \$150.00
Annual Individual	— \$10.00
Annual Couple	— \$8.00
Seniors (65 & over)	— \$5.00

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

Current membership in the Waterford Historical Society runs from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. Membership dues help to fund our newsletter and its mailing cost. This will be the last newsletter sent to those who have not renewed their membership this year.

Purchase a pair of Waterford histories for \$20.

Please note: The new Society publication "This is Waterford" is being offered to paid-up-dues members who order 2 or more copies at \$25 per copy. Shipping and handling at \$6 per copy will still apply.

Nuances: Recapping the 2004 historical programs

(Continued from page 3)

ford (her granddaughter Clarissa Johnson, daughter of Asa and Hannah Horr Johnson, born in 1787).

Annie Sawin Holt used the table in her house to prepare meals for boarders. As she used to bump into the table, she had one corner rounded off, probably sometime in the 1920s. When Della and her husband Steve Klament acquired the table, it was covered with old red paint; they rounded off all the corners for symmetry and refinished the table. While no one knows the exact path the table took to get to Della, there are a number of Johnsons, Herseys, Sawins, Merrills and Holts who have owned it. The unique table has some distinctive saw markings that should date it and comes with a family genealogy from Ed Holt.

The July program was on the Civil War; sadly I was unable to attend it and have seen no notes taken on the talk by Paul Artlip and Ken Bradbury. There are some interesting Civil War era papers and journals in our collection and we are always looking for more. Another recent task of the WHS, taken on by Marjorie Kimball, Richard Jones and his brother, Sawin Millett and others, has been to create plaques for Waterford veterans of both the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars, to be displayed at the new Town House along with the names of veterans of more recent wars.

In August we saw a repeat of an excellent Quilt and Handicraft exhibit from last winter. Cynthia brought her own creations and talked about the history of quilt-making. In looking at the society's collection she discovered quilt squares from a friendship quilt which probably dates from 1878 and which was never completed. She hopes to put it together to display during the Oxford County Bicentennial year of 2005, and has already received a very special gift to help her. The folks at Old Sturbridge Village sent her a quilt batting carded and prepared on her grandfather's carding mill, which used to stand in South Waterford but which now operates at OSV. Because of the delicacy of the 18th century mill equipment, it is run very infrequently now and seldom makes batting, so this was an honor.

Joann Fillebrown brought afghan and cross-stitch work created by her mother, Irene Bean. Braided rugs done by

Clara Bell Hamlin were discussed--some of them are still at the library--and Virginia Tyler Cutler remembered a friendship quilt she and Agnes Lahti worked on as girls in 4-H. Mary Andrews had a wonderful quilt of family memories made by her daughter Judy Green.

The September meeting (moved on account of weather) included George Stilphen of Bolster's Mills, speaking on apples. He has written the definitive book on three centuries of apples in Maine. Though he mostly answered questions, George imparted a lot of interesting historical information. Originally from Kazakhstan, the species of fruit we call the apple is not native to the United States; it probably came here about 1520 with the first European explorers who operated off-shore island fishing stations in the summers. The apple industry declined in Maine because of climate change and winter kill and moved to New York but there were at one time probably 700 varieties grown in Maine--maybe 200 in Waterford, which has had many famous orchards. Today if you can find any of the old varieties, they probably have changed greatly. The Maine Pomological Society has information on "antique apples." Apples in our grocery stores today come from Oregon and Washington, mostly. David Sanderson has given me an undated newspaper clipping about Wilson Morse, one of the best orchardists in Maine at the time this article was published. Please see the article about Apples of Waterford. We think that George Stilphen may come again next year to talk to us.

Finally, the October meeting just recently featured Dr. Larry Murch, who spoke about the Waterford Fair, and Diane Jones of the Fryeburg Historical Society, who spoke about Fryeburg Fair. Dr. Murch gave us a fascinating look at the origin of fairs in the cattle trading of our Colonial settlers. Stock shows (and the Stock Market!) were arranged for people to share the wealth and buy and sell cows and bulls. Originally oxen were used to do all the pulling on early farms (the Durham and the Devon are two surviving

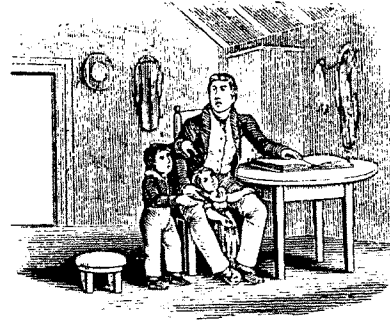
oxen breeds) and pulling competitions were set up to judge who had the best animals.

When "Tom Green's Fair" began about 1852, people drove their animals to the Waterford common. But farming changed in the 1860s. Pre-Civil War it was subsistence farming, according to Dr. Murch, but post-Civil War it changed to cash crops, especially corn for the canning factories--which began with canning corn for the Army in the war. Corn growing and canning were big business in Waterford and the surrounding areas until Clarence Birdseye's frozen corn began to corner the market. Burnham & Morrill sold out locally in 1964. After the railroad came to Maine our primary business changed to logging and horses were used instead of oxen. Horse dealers traded at the railroad depots as horse-pulling and horse-racing took over the fairs.

Dr. Murch presented us with copies of the incorporation of the World's Fair in 1928--called that, he thinks, as a kind of a joke because of the international expositions which were taking place in the 1920s. He lamented the fact that, without Waterford in the title, no one knows where it is, and, since it is no longer the weekend before Fryeburg Fair, it has lost some of its built-in audience.

Diane Jones and her husband Ed brought us many pictures which they and others collected and organized for a book on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Fryeburg Fair, incorporated in 1851. Diane and Ed run the amazing Farm Museum during the week of their fair, which has living history exhibits, demonstrations and a "little red school-house" from the 1870s. In 1885 the fair began on the first acreage purchased at its present site; today it has more than 400,000 visitors the first week in October. Many of the photos were by our own Bill (Dood) Haynes, who has been doing publicity for Fryeburg Fair since 1977.

Consider this an invitation to come to our meetings next year and to bring some friends. Children like our programs; so do summer vacationists as well as the native Mainers. There is always either a supper or potluck refreshments.



Of Christmas Trees and Schools

by David Sanderson

As nearly as I can determine from family diaries and other documents, Waterford folks in general did not adopt the custom of the Christmas tree until some time after 1900. Historically, the custom of having a fir tree at Christmas came to England with Prince Albert from Germany, although the Americans may have seen the custom first among the Hessian troops who came to fight in the Revolution.

The New England Puritans were not impressed; they banned Christmas entirely. The pagan roots of the holiday were a problem for religious conservatives for a long time. In 1851 a minister in Cleveland put up a tree in his church and was nearly fired for doing it. Boston schools stayed in session on Christmas until 1870. Much of this detail is from a quick Internet search, which also reveals that the first Christmas trees were sold in New York City in 1851, and that as of 1900 one in five families in the United States were using Christmas trees.

My grandfather Burton Sanderson's diaries from the last quarter of the nineteenth century never mention Christmas trees, though a celebration was always held, with presents. In at least one year during the 1880's school kept for Burton and his siblings on Christmas.

What we do read about is what was

called "a merry Christmas," as in "we had a merry Christmas." This was not the modern exclamation, but rather what seems to have been the typical Christmas event. It usually included getting together with neighbors, often for an exchange of presents. There was food and perhaps some singing; but it was as much a gathering of friends as it was a celebration of the season.

I do not know whether this sort of custom has been documented elsewhere, but it certainly was a key part of the seasonal celebration here in Waterford. Family gifts were exchanged on Christmas Day, December 25. I mention this specifically because the old English tradition of celebrating on January 6 (the twelfth day of Christmas) persisted elsewhere in America, especially in the Southern Appalachians. I find no evidence that attending church was part of the Christmas celebration particularly, no surprise given the history cited above.

My Internet reference claims 20% with trees in 1900, and goes on to say that by 1920 the custom had become universal. My grandmother Minnie Halford Sanderson, Burton's wife, taught at the Flat

school from 1924 until 1929. It is interesting to note that she boarded with Carrie Plummer at the Flat, rather than trying to make the trip to and from the Flat from McWain Hill every day, an example that tells us much about travel conditions around Waterford at that time.

Minnie worked hard at her teaching (eight grades, instruction periods were 10 minutes long; the

teacher had to be moving constantly from one piece of teaching to another), and worked equally hard at what today I suppose would be called "enrichment." For one thing, she played the piano and had a pump organ at the school.

For Christmas she did something that we may think of as modern, by organizing a program put on by the students. Burton's diary refers to it as "a Christmas tree," another familiar-seeming expression that doesn't mean what we expect. His diary says "went to Minnie's Christmas tree," that is the ceremony, not the object itself. Here's what the newspaper had to say about one of Minnie's programs, I believe in December 1928 (Minnie's last term - in January of 1929 she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and died in September 1929, age 42):

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS TREE

Waterford Dec. 18. The closing exercises of the Pine Tree League of the Waterford school were held here Friday afternoon and a goodly number attended. After

(Continued on page 6)



Minnie and class in front of Flat school, winter 1925, standing in the road in front of the large white pine that once stood by the schoolhouse.



Burton and Minnie at home, McWain Farm, mid-20s.

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