

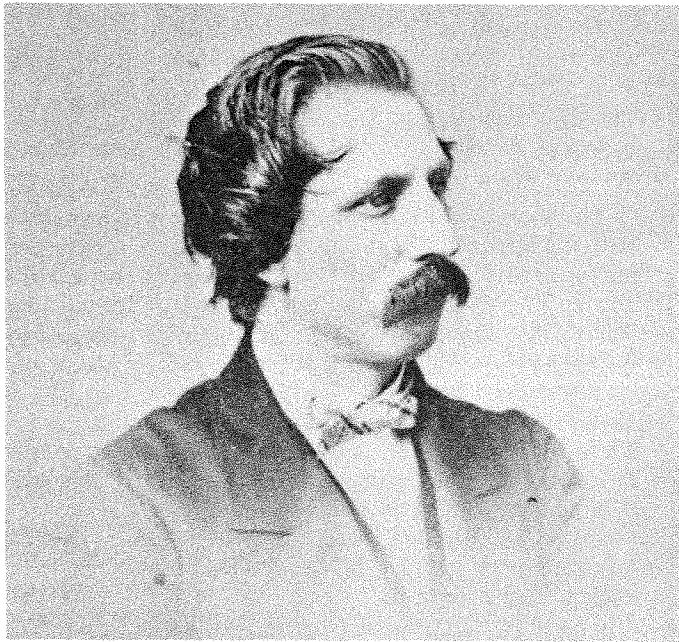


# The Waterford Echoes

Volume 3 Number 1

January 1982

Waterford Historical Society



Artemus Ward 1834 - 1867

## ARTEMUS WARD REVIVAL; NEW BOOK ON WATERFORD'S OWN HUMORIST

(Editor's Note: John J. Pullen has completed a book on the life and works of Artemus Ward due to be published in 1982. He has supplied *The Waterford Echoes* with an article about his book, *Comic Relief: The Life and Laughter of Artemus Ward*).

Although Artemus Ward is well remembered in Waterford and, generally, in Maine, he is no longer as widely known or well understood nationally as he deserves to be. It is natural that many people, once famous, are forgotten as the years and decades go by, but in Artemus Ward's case there are added obscurities. For one thing, he suffers from a mistaken association with an outdated genre; he is often thought of as just one of those 19th century fellows whose humor came only from misspelled words. And for another, his image tends to be confusing because the name Artemus Ward stands for two persons: the fictional old side-showman who purportedly wrote the misspelled letters, and the elegant, slender, scholarly-looking Charles Farrar Brown whose comic lectures

convulsed audiences all across America and in England. Behind both those roles, those who know Artemus Ward know there was a keen, sophisticated intelligence and a loving spirit worthy of renown. As the 150th anniversary of his birth approaches, it is good to see activities in progress which will stimulate wider recognition and understanding of Artemus Ward.

(Continued on Page 2)

## JANUARY MEETING

The Society's January Meeting will be held January 7 at The Artemus Ward House.

The program will be the showing of MPBN-TV's documentary about Artemus Ward. The program was filmed in September, 1981 at the humorist's home. Joe Perham of West Paris plays the genial showman at home.

## NEW AT OUR NORTH WATERFORD MUSEUM

Artifacts received at our North Waterford Museum this year are a spinning wheel from Dr. William S. Tacey, shoe lasts from Eleanor Stearns, a most interesting early 1930 film with projector from Margaret S. Werner, former owner with her late husband, Matt, of Camp Ironwood.

From Helen J. Miller, Chatham, New Jersey, we received a newsclipping pertaining to a Waterford resident in New Jersey, 13 snapshots, ten old Waterford postcards, a 1947 letter from Mary Kimball to David Kimball, a Waterford cousin, with a postscript from cousin Mary Wheeler; auction notice at Whittum homestead, Cobb's Hill, East Otisfield (no date), and an old envelope.

Bud Hamlin brought an old barrel manufactured in Waterford, and an old electric meter - one of the earliest around town, and old town reports.

Lillian Kimball contributed "The Poetical Writings of Rev. Truman S. Perry, including a historical sketch." He was a minister here many years ago. She also contributed three Xeroxed pages, "Episode in The Life of Mrs. Horne, a full-blooded Penobscot Indian" (whose Penobscot Indian name was Wakseeja).

A dozen architectural books were given by Lois Hubbard. They are very valuable books.

Lois King contributed the video tape taken of the items in the Mary Gage Rice Museum.

Valuable genealogical items from Keith F. Brown (Life Member) from San Diego, California.

The Society is very grateful to these donors for their contributions.

## SINCE MAY

### JUNE 4

Margaret S. Werner, with the help of her son, Meade, showed an early 1930 film on their old projector (they gave both to our Society) at our North Waterford Museum. Included in the scenes was the blowing up of a huge rock that had obstructed the building of which is now Routes 35 and 37 along Bear Pond. The view had been taken from the opposite shore. Other scenes were of maneuvers at Camp Ironwood, all very interesting.

### JUNE 13

The Society hosted the Oxford County Historical Society at the Wilkins Community House.

### JUNE 21

The first performance of "The Genial Showman At Home" for benefit of the Society was given at The Artemus Ward House Barn by Herbert Adams and Bill Wood.

### JUNE 28

At a 2 p.m. ceremony James Tyler, Pres. of the Waterford Historical Society unveiled the bronze plaque on the fireplace mantle in memory of Christopher Rounds. James spoke of Chris' dedication to the Historical Society and his efforts in moving the Mary Gage Rice Museum from the Gage lot to the Library grounds.

### JULY 2

The Waterford Society met with the Bethel Society on the Moses Mason back lawn, beginning with a 6 p.m. picnic lunch. Bethel Historical Society director, Stanley Howe recounted connections between Bethel and Waterford.

The first mail by postal rider went from Waterford to the Moses Mason House which was the Bethel post office in 1815, and Dr. Moses Mason was the postmaster.

Howe cited relationships between the towns in militia matters, temperance meetings and religious activities. Dr. Leander Gage from Bethel settled in Waterford.

There were over 20 marriages with Waterford women and Bethel men.

After the business meeting, all were entertained by Bill Wood and Herbert Adams doing their Artemus Ward show.

### JULY 18

A public spaghetti supper was held at the Wilkins Community House. The meat balls were made by Irene Millett and Helen Buchert, the sauce by Stephen Dewing, and the salad by George Allen.

### AUGUST 6

The video tape of the Mary Gage Rice Museum was shown at the Wilkins Community House.

### SEPTEMBER 3

Hank Burns showed his slides of Waterford illustrating the writings of Henry David Thoreau at the Wilkins Community House after a spaghetti supper there.

### OCTOBER 1

The meeting was scheduled for the North Waterford Museum but it was too cold and Dorothy Erickson invited us to her home. The program was on Rev. Truman S. Perry, a former minister.

### NOVEMBER 5

The meeting was held at the Wilkins House with a potluck supper. Agnes Lahti reported on prices to have the 1879 history reprinted. During the evening members perused a scrapbook kept by Irene K. Bean from 1974 to 1981.

## DECEMBER 3

The meeting was held at Bill and Margaret Sawyer's. Skipp Green read from a Journal kept by Constance Warren's early ancestor who came to Rice Hill from Norridgewock. Trees were notched on the downhill side and a whole block fell at once.

*(Continued From Page 1)*

The new prominence given the Artemus Ward House by Lynn Baker, the shows performed by Messrs. Adams, Wood and Perham, and various projects of the Waterford Historical Society all contribute to an awakening of interest in the great humorist. If all goes well, within the next year or so, my book, *Comic Relief: The Life and Laughter of Artemus Ward* will appear and will, I hope, add something to Artemus Ward's reputation. It was a great satisfaction to me that my previous book, *The Twentieth Maine*, did much to restore Maine's Civil War hero, Joshua Chamberlain, to national recognition; it would be equally satisfying to see the same done for Artemus Ward.

The book — to describe it briefly — includes selections from both the humor found in the "old showman's" letters and the platform performances of Artemus Ward; these are woven into an account of Ward's life. This tells of his boyhood in Maine, his wanderings through mid-century America as a young journeyman printer and his days as an editor of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* and New York's *Vanity Fair*. The book contains information of the colorful people he knew: Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Adah Isaacs Menken and others; of his lecture tours including a hazardous journey through the then untamed west on the Overland Stage and a post-war tour through the deep South. Finally, it tells of his lionization in literary London, his hectic life there and his death in England at the age of 33.

I hope the book will be valuable to students of American literature for its interpretation of Artemus Ward's little-realized direct influence upon other American writers of his day: Mark Twain, Bret Harte and others. Indirectly, it was through Ward's intercession that Mark Twain's story about the Jumping Frog was first published — an event that set its author's feet upon the ladder to fame. Ward's writing and lecturing styles were an early influence upon Mark Twain. And when Artemus Ward received both popular and scholarly acclaim in London, his success there was a stunning demonstration to all writers back home of the value of native American humor and its interest to the whole English speaking world.

The research and writing, off and on, occupied some 15 years and included trips to London and Southampton, England, where I visited the room where Artemus Ward died. Through most of these years Margaret Sawyer has assisted me from time to time with the research and typing. She has been a great help with this book. Others whose cooperation I have greatly appreciated include Ruth Rounds and the late Flora Abbott. Also Maj. Gen. Stanhope B. Mason, who helped with pictorial material, and James H. Tyler, who, as President of the Waterford Historical Society, gave me permission to use one of its pictures.

During the period of the book's preparation, I wrote two articles about Artemus. One appeared in the February 7, 1979 issue of the *Saturday Review* and was entitled "Artemus Ward: The Man Who Made Lincoln Laugh." The other appeared in the Fall 1979 issue of the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* and was entitled "Mark Twain and Artemus Ward: A Bittersweet

*(Continued on Page 3)*

(Continued from Page 2)

Friendship Is Born in Nevada." Copies of both are in the files of the Waterford Historical Society. I am planning to write other articles, and I hope to hear of further activities and events in Waterford and Maine that will lend credence to the words that are carved into Artemus Ward's marble headstone in Elm Vale Cemetery:

His memory will live as a sweet  
and unfading recollection.

—John J. Pullen  
November, 1981

### BE SOBER WHEN DRESSING THE HOLIDAY BIRD

(The following is excerpted from *Lost Paradise* by Robert P. Tristram Coffin, published in 1934 by The MacMillian Company. Bowdoin Professor Coffin was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1935 for "Strange Holiness", a volume about Maine.)

One Christmas season Dan's mother persuaded her son to dress some poultry for market. She had gotten an order for some carefully selected and hand-picked fowl, from fussy college people in town. The ice was on the clam flats, and Dan was at leisure. He gave in. He was also under the influence — as far as he ever went. For there wasn't any fire water going strong enough to put him off his superb feet. His head might swim and his hands might fumble, he never faltered in his gait. He could weather the rankest of fusil oil beverages of a state that had Temperance for its patron saint since the day it became a state. Cap'n Dan went steadily to the barn for the fowl.

They were going to roost among the lofty rafters which had not had hay on them since Ebenezer Stover went to meet his Maker on the wings of the wind of 1888. They were too high for Dan to reach. They were also awfully mistrustful. Dan had the axe and a certain air. He clucked and clucked. But no go. He coaxed and threatened. The biddies eyed him and stayed right where they were. He went and got corn. He strewed it over the floor. At last several hens below the average in hen intelligence ventured down. By some miracle, after he had pulled all the tail feathers out of some of the hens, Dan caught one of them. He chose a defunct horseshed for a block and smote. He released the hen to let her kick out her kick and finish bleeding. But his eye, so fine in detec-

ting herring under a ripple, had failed him. With a squak of agony the fowl flew bill-less to the roof. Dan went through the whole thing again. Once more it was a failure. When Edward arrived to take the poultry seller to town, Dan was pleading with a handful of corn to a horrified company of birds on the rafters all without beaks. Edward got a shotgun from the house. He put the fowls out of their agony one by one. Then he and Dan plucked them by lantern light. He pleaded with Dan to be easy on what was left of the carcasses. Dan didn't pay the slightest attention but skinned each bird, feathers and all. The college folks had a lot of meat that might do for a chowder, but hardly for roasting whole that Christmas Day. There weren't any more orders for fowls from the Stover farm.

### ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Waterford Historical Society annual general meeting will be held March 4, 1982 at the Wilkins House.

1982 memberships are due now! Use the form below.

### ADDITIONAL MEMBERS FOR 1981

LIFE: Raynor and Georgia Brown, Miriam Sylvester Monroe

PATRON: Mr. and Mrs. Fred Stockwell, Thomas Bishop (deceased), Mr. and Mrs. William A. Wheeler III.

CONTRIBUTING: Agnes E. Blake, Amy Hubbard, Elizabeth Kilburn, Francis M. Scola, David Percival

SR. CITIZEN: Bess Dewing, Dorothy Erickson, Charles A. Fillebrown, Mildred Glynn, Ethel and Irving Grayber, Ida Kimball, Julia Morse, Velma A. Thompson, Katherine Saunders, Margaret Werner

SUSTAINING: Alan and Leslie Bradford, Stephen Dewing, Edna and John Dugan, Constance and George Elliott, Mary Fillebrown, Edith and Prentiss Kimball, Elford and Doris McAllister, Elizabeth Anne Monroe, Dr. John Monroe and Candace Monroe, John Atherton Monroe (the Monroes are the son and his wife of Miriam Monroe and her two grandchildren from California), Betty and Dean Stone, Tony Waldeier, Meade Werner.

Join the Waterford Historical Society. Check appropriate classification and mail to Box 2, Waterford, ME. 04088.


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

Waterford, Maine 1875-1976 was published in August, 1977. Copies are still available: from the Waterford Town Office, Mrs. Curtis Millett above Waterford Memorial School, and by mail, plus 75¢ postage and handling from Margaret Sawyer, Treasurer. In the State, the book is \$10.00, and if mailed, \$10.75. Out of State the book is \$9.52, plus 75¢. (That is less our state tax).



adv.

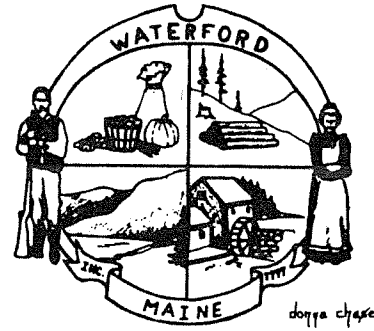
### IN MEMORIAM

Thomas Bishop died September 9, 1981 unexpectedly in New York after a three-day membership in the Society. He was a long-time summer visitor to the Bishop House in Waterford Village.

Blynn E. Davis, 95, educator and Bridgton historian, and our first member, died October 24. He was very helpful to our Society in helping to organize and get it incorporated in 1964, and he attended our meetings with his daughter, Dorothy (a life member) as long as he was able.

*adv.*

### FOR SALE



6" square tile includes cork back, hanger and gift box. Sepia on tan background.  
\$3.00 plus .5¢ sales tax

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

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Waterford,  
Maine 04088