



Waterford Echoes

VOLUME XXXIX Number 1 (Issue 50)

Spring/Summer 2010

Waterford Historical Society



Birch Rock Camp, first season, 1926, along with the rock that gave the camp its name. The two original owners are on the left and right of the group. George Howe, who taught natural history at the camp, leans against the rock. Photo courtesy David Sanderson.

A Century of Summer Camps

Maine summer camps for children began in the Allagash in 1894, along with a 19th century national movement to escape urban industrialization. By the beginning of the 20th century, families wanted to leave stifling cities for the country experience, both for vacations and for their children's health. "Wilderness adventures," extolled by people such as Theodore Roosevelt and Ernest Thompson Seton, were considered crucial to overcome the stultifying effects of modernism. (Wilson, Harold Fischer, *The Hill Country of Northern New England*.)

The oldest summer camp for children in Waterford is Camp Wigwam, founded in 1910 by tennis coach Abraham "Mandy" Mandelstam and Arnold "Pop" Lehman. It did not arrive on Bear Pond, however, until 1913 (see [This Is Waterford](#), pg. 157). Still operating today, its co-director Bobby Strauss has been recruiting city boys for many years. He will speak about Camp Wigwam at our June meeting.

Though today only three camps remain operating (Wigwam, Waziyatah and Birch Rock), at one time there were at least ten camps, each with a different focus for children's education and uplifting experiences.

Camp Waganaki, created in 1919 by Carl Warren where Camp Susan Curtis is now and built on Lake McWain in 1922, offered "Christian boys" a small and select camping party "off for a joyous summer in the deep Maine woods." A wonderful booklet in our collection promotes its wholesome food, fresh air, principled counselors and many sports including horse-back riding, fishing, climbing Mt. Washington and N.R.A. Junior Rifle Corps, among others.

Camp Chickawah was founded in 1920. Originally a farm, it was taken over by a health and physical fitness teacher. The camp even advertised that they cut their own ice in the winter.

Camp Konewago began in 1922. It later became the first location of Camp Kokosing. By 1925 Kokosing was a girls' camp on Keoka, built by current resident Betty Miller's grandparents Italia and George Tomes. By 1947 it had become cottages for families.

Waziyatah, founded by an equestrienne for girls, later became co-ed and added creative arts as a focus. After five own-

(Continued on page 3)

President's Column

by Bonnie Parsons

The Trustees have been meeting all winter to plan a very exciting list of activities for 2010, starting with the Annual Meeting at the Old Town House at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 10. There will be speakers and exhibits on **A Century of Summer Camping for Children** as well as election of Trustees for the ensuing year. All regular meetings are the second Thursday of each month, usually with potluck refreshments. A special event will be a buffet dinner sponsored by Birch Rock Camp on June 19 at 6:30 p.m. (reservations only). There will be tours of the camp and entertainment by Vocal Solution.

The Rice Museum and the Old Town House will be open during the 5th of July Parade and the first Breakfast of the year. On July 8, a meeting on the History of Town Churches will be held at North Waterford Congregational Church in celebration of their 150th anniversary. Light refreshments will be provided by the church.

July 25 will be a Photo Show at the Old Town House in conjunction with Music Sunday at the Flat. We would love to have photos by Waterford people or about Waterford – particularly the farms, barns and camps, which is our focus for this year. If you would be willing to share your photos, we will put them up on Saturday, July 24 and you can take them home again on Sunday afternoon. Please speak to any trustee. The Waterford Library will be open that day as well.

On Saturday, Aug. 14 we plan a Barn Tour day, beginning at the Old Town House with a map of various barns of Waterford. Admission will be charged. The Aug. 12 meeting will feature at least one speaker on barns at the Wilkins House.

The rest of the year will include a meeting on Sept. 9 on Rethinking Food and sustainable agriculture at the Bear Mt. Grange in South Waterford; Oral History and Scrapbooks on Oct. 14 at the Wilkins House; and the end-of-the-year potluck supper at the North Waterford Church at 6 p.m. on Nov. 11 (Veterans' Day) with speaker Art Wiknik, who has written about his experiences as a veteran. We hope you will join us.

Waterford Echoes

Vol. XXXIX Number 1 Issue 50 Spring/Summer 2010

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.

2009-2010 OFFICERS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| President: | Bonnie Parsons |
| Vice President: | Carol Waldeier |
| Secretary: | Nancy Marcotte |
| Treasurer: | Ralph MacKinnon |
| Membership: | Joanne MacKinnon |
| Newsletter Editor: | Bill Haynes |
| Trustees: | Tony and Donna Butterall, Marge Nihan, Lilo Willoughby and Henry and Joy Plate Marjorie Kimball, honorary trustee |

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Classification: Individual/Couple

Life member: \$100/\$150

Annual: \$10/\$15

Seniors (65 & over) — \$5/\$8

Send checks to:

Waterford Historical Society
PO Box 201
Waterford ME 04088

Membership renewals are due June 1. Membership dues help to fund our newsletter and its mailing cost.

We have the following publications for sale: "History of Waterford 1775-1875" and "History of Waterford 1875-1976" for \$15 each (order both for \$25). "This is Waterford 1803-2003" for \$30 (order all three for \$50). Add \$8 to ship one book or \$12 to ship two or three books. Paid-up dues members qualify for a 50% discount.

Summer Camps

(Continued from page 1)

ers, it is still operating on Lake McWain with a belief that camping affects life choices through fostering teamwork, independent thinking, a sense of humor and respect for others' viewpoints.

Camp McWain, founded in 1923 by local nurses Helen Sanderson and Mary Marshall, concentrated on nutrition and health for girls until 1931 and then for adults until 1944.

In 1925 Ironwood came to Bear Pond, first for boys and then co-ed under the leadership of Matt and Margaret Werner. Operating until 1964, the camp's emphasis was on education, sharing and personality development. Later it was a campground and today it is private, but a children's park in South Waterford honors the Werners.

Birch Rock was founded by teachers William Brewster and Bartlett Boyden in 1926, to focus on swimming, life saving, and reading as well as personal development. Closed only one summer during World War II for military training, now it is a non-profit corporation of former campers and the Brewster family.



Camp McWain counselors and senior campers, 1930. Advertised for "the delicate girl," from 1924 until 1931 they maintained a vigorous schedule of mountain climbing, mineral digging and swimming. Photo by Kabill, a Portland photographic firm that specialized in panoramic views. Head Counselor Verona Shaw is the first of three girls in the rear. The dog is Murphy, a camper who accompanied girls from Boston. Photo courtesy David Sanderson.

About 100 boys per summer experience Birch Rock, as well as other campers in Wilderness Adventure and Family Camping programs. A good neighbor, they have often contributed to Waterford Historical Society, including this year when they will put on a dinner and give tours for us.

Passaconaway (from 1932 until it became Camp Joseph in 1960) will also be remembered in our June meeting. Founded at the former Sumner Stone Tavern (today Bradley Woodworking) by Arthur G. and Mary L. J. Carlson, Camp Passaconaway wanted to develop leaders of men. "Noblesse oblige" was their motto and only boys with above average scholastic and social records (but both rich and poor) were chosen.

According to The Maine Youth Camping Foundation, there are still 50 camps between Sebago Lake and Bethel, serving over 7,000 children a year. In all of Maine there are 200 camps, contributing an estimated \$245 million into the economy. Countless former campers have come back to Maine every summer, bought cottages, or even retired here.

For more information on Waterford camps, see our books and publications. This summer: a Photo Exhibit on Camps & Barns. We hope you will share your photographs of either on July 25.



Consolidation Controversies by Nancy Marcotte

Consolidation of schools in Waterford had been controversial, at least since 1909 when the first proposal for a centrally located school was voted down.

School Union 21 between Norway, Oxford and Waterford, proposed before 1920, was finally accomplished around 1922, mostly to share a Superintendent and to facilitate placing teachers trained at Norway and Oxford High Schools. The "ignorance" that caused World War I was one of the arguments for joining other towns to improve rural education.

On our own again, the Waterford Memorial School was dedicated in 1949 and finally completed in 1954 when two additional rooms were added to bring the classes down from North Waterford #10. It had become a great source of pride and community involvement after much arguing; yet only eight years later a committee was formed to look into a new consolidation with another administrative unit.

Since Waterford secondary students were tuitioned out to Norway and Paris High Schools, as well as to Fryeburg and Bridgton Academies and Bridgton High School, those were the directions explored. The state Sinclair Act forced the issue and in 1965 Waterford citizens voted to join Maine School Administrative District 17 (at that time only Norway-Paris but West Paris and Oxford joined when we did.) They actually voted twice, since the initial vote in October was controversial (79-74.) A special town meeting was called three weeks later at which a move made to rescind the original vote was defeated 119-84.

The controversy in 1965 was over ex-

(Continued on page 4)

Nuances — Schools

(Continued from page 3)

pense and fear of loss of the community school. A new high school was built in 1967 (with the name Oxford Hills proposed by my dad, Glenn Chute). In 1976 when the second Waterford history was written, small class sizes dictated elementary students being bused to and from Harrison – again the case in 2010 because of dwindling school-age population in Waterford. Things do run in cycles. However, SAD 17 has made a commitment to maintaining community schools in each of the eight towns, at least K-4. This was reinforced in 1994 by a \$2.2 million renovation and addition of library, computer room and multipurpose gym. The clapboards and windows of the older building were carefully matched by Portland Design Team.

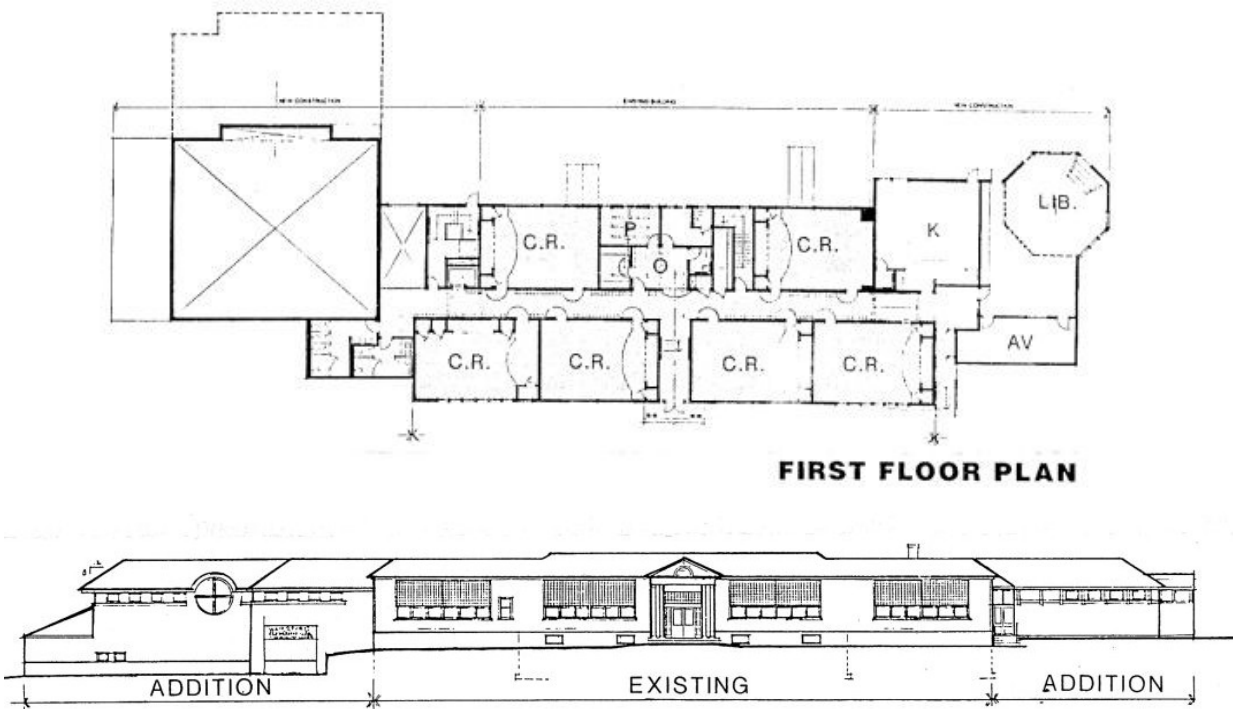
At the re-dedication in 1995, the late Tony Waldeier, beloved teacher/principal, said that it was 1985 when Waterford Memorial School had again become K-6 for just Waterford students. “I’ve been here 22 years,” he said, “and this is one of the most exciting things I can remember in town.” Thanks were expressed to our school directors and building committee members, such as Fred Fortier, Deb Howe and Suzanne Uhl-Myers.

Community Parent Teacher Organization involvement has continued for fundraising such as for the playground in the 1990s and for the sign on the lawn in 2008. In big or small schools, and despite controversy, the town of Waterford continues to support its students. As Dr. Hubbard said in 1949, “the best school will be run...from the community in which it lies.”



Tony Waldeier and students in the 1980s.

Bill Haynes photo



ARTEMUS WARD: THE MAN WHO MADE LINCOLN LAUGH

by Lee Warren Merrill

(continued from last issue)

Charles Farrar Brown was rapidly becoming a local celebrity in Cleveland, Ohio in 1858. His duties as a local editor carried him to all parts of the city and his natural curiosity and ready wit attracted him to everyone. But, though his fame was growing rapidly, his salary was not. Since his "Artemus Ward" letters were already being published by *Vanity Fair*, a New York humor magazine, he resigned from the *Plain Dealer* in November, 1860. After a brief period of roaming (some say carousing), he arrived in New York City and took an editorial staff position at *Vanity Fair* for twenty dollars a week. He was welcomed with open arms, wine and dined profusely. This was the life he was looking for and in that brilliant literary society he turned out much of his best humor.

Brown began to hear his own jokes from the popular Artemus Ward letters told by comedians in every travelling show that came to town, so he made plans to use them on stage himself. Persuaded by his artistic, if somewhat erratic friends in New York, he quit the magazine to give it a try at being a comic lecturer.

His first stage show consisted of a series of rather disconnected jokes loosely strung together, called "My Seven Grandmothers." This changed to "The Children in the Woods," which eventually became "Babes in the Woods." After publication of Artemus Ward: His Book, his shows became increasingly popular and it soon became apparent that Charles Farrar Brown had found his true calling.

In the course of his travels, Brown had met E. P. Hingston, an Englishman who managed travelling shows, and Charles retained him as his manager. A trip to the West was arranged and a widely-publicized incident practically assured his success. Thomas McQuire, manager of the San Francisco Opera House, wired Ward to ask him

what he would take for forty nights in California; Ward wired back: "Brandy and water."

Wherever the wine of life flowed freely and men of humor and wit would gather, Artemus Ward was at home. One such place was the booming mining town of Virginia City, Nevada, where he met Mark Twain and his three day visit turned into three weeks. In San Francisco, Artemus passed several "festive nights among pleasant companions," including writer Bret Harte.

The item Harte wrote for his newspaper at that time gave an estimation of the artist.

"Artemus Ward is not the greatest American humorist, nor does he himself profess to be... His strength does not lie simply in grotesque spelling, that is a mechanical trick suggested by his education as a printer, but in his insight to the type of humor that appeals and belongs to a country of boundless prairies and endless rivers. It is the essence of that fun which overlies the surface of our national life, a humor that has more or less local coloring, that elevates slang that is of today and full of present application." (The Complete Works of Artemus Ward, Seitz, Harper Bros, 1919.)

In June of 1866, after a brief vacation in Waterford, Artemus Ward made a long-anticipated trip to England, preceded by Hingston.

As in New York Artemus became the darling of the literary society of London, wine (mostly) and dined until he began to show signs of failing health. He wrote several articles for the famed magazine *Punch*, but he was not long to enjoy his acclaim. He died on March 6, 1867. In May of that year, his body, in accordance with his wishes, was sent home to Waterford. The children of the village gathered to strew wild flowers on the grave of the man who had been such a restless wanderer in life.

*Lee Warren Merrill is a former Waterford resident from Pickens, SC. Please see **This Is Waterford** for a bibliography of Artemus Ward works.*



In Memoriam

Alice D. Graves, 88, of Westport, CT, died at her home on Nov. 29, 2009. The wife of Royal S. Graves, she was born Sept. 4, 1921, on her family's farm in Waterford, the daughter of Wilson and Helen (Deering) Morse. After attending the one-room Waterford public school through eighth grade, she graduated from Bridgton Academy and Westbrook Junior College. She married Royal S. Graves at the Yale Chapel in May 1944, and the couple recently celebrated 65 years of marriage. Mrs. Graves and her family moved to Westport, CT, in June 1966, and soon after, she began teaching at the Westport-Weston Cooperative Nursery School, retiring in 1987. Summers were happily spent at her cottage in Waterford, close to family and surrounded by nature. Mrs. Graves worked throughout her adult life on issues of civil rights and social justice. She marched on Washington D.C. in 1963, and listened to Dr. Martin Luther King deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech. In Westport, Mrs. Graves and her husband Royal became active members of the Unitarian Church, and she served on the Social Justice Committee for many years. Peace and human rights were a lifelong focus. She protested our involvement in Vietnam and our entry into Iraq. She worked against apartheid in South Africa and for refugees in Darfur. She supported low-income housing in Fairfield County and bootstrap development/micro-loans through the Foundation of International Community Assistance (FINCA). Mrs. Graves is survived by her husband Royal; two sons, Sandy Graves of Wethersfield, CT and Allan Graves of Newtown, CT; two grandchildren; sister, Marian L. Morse of South Paris; and nieces and nephews. She is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

Benjamin F. Button, 82, of North Waterford, died Dec. 17, 2009 in Wesley Chapel, FL. He was born in North Waterford May 18, 1927, the son of Wilbur L. Button and Blanche H. Button and was a graduate of the Waterford School system. Mr. Button retired from the U.S. Navy after 21 years of active service from the beginning of WWII through the Korean Conflict and the Viet Nam War and retired in 1965. He was decorated for his dedicated service to the country. After retiring from the Navy, he established and managed the family's "Button Buckskins" retail stores in Danville, VT and Oxford. He was retired for the past 10 years, living between Florida and the Five Kezar Ponds in North Waterford. He was also a 50-year member of Mt. Tir'em Lodge, AF & AM, of Waterford. He and his wife, the former Doris Glassman, were married through December 5, 1997 when she passed away. Mr. Button is survived by his sons, Patrick of Bel Air, MD, Michael of Bradenton, FL and Eric of Norway, and five grandchildren. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Chloe M. Colby, 79, of Green Township, Ohio and Waterford, died Dec. 18, 2009. She was born in South Paris on Dec. 20, 1929, the daughter of Glenn R. and Marguerite (Pearman) McIntire. Her family lived in Brunswick, but often returned to the hill country for holidays and vacations at Pine Lodge, the family camp on Papoose Pond. The extended McIntire clan would often gather there and Papoose Pond would come to take a special place in her heart. She grew up and went to school in Brunswick.



In her freshman year at Brunswick High School, she met a charming redheaded lad from the town of Topsham across the river. The two soon became an "item," appearing in high school theater productions and collaborating in chemistry labs. After graduation, Chloe went to Tufts, where she was a Phi Beta Kappa, and from there to a scholarship to the University of Michigan where she earned a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology. The redhead, meanwhile, went on to Princeton, where he earned an engineering degree and then served a tour of duty as a naval officer. The two had tried to break up when they were in college, but that plan never really had a chance, and when the sailor came calling again in 1953, Chloe and Edward "Gene" Colby were married. They moved to Cincinnati and within 10 years had four kids. She was an elder at North Presbyterian Church in Northside and helped to start a day care center there. After the children were grown, she became a guidance counselor in the vocational education program at Aiken High School. She had a great interest in genealogy and formed Living Roots, a research consulting firm that took her to many places around the country. During her summers in Waterford, she became an active contributor to the Waterford Historical Society, chronicling the lives and events of that community where her family had played such a big part. She is survived by her husband, Gene, and children Edward Jr., Roy S., Margaret Ann and Grace Elizabeth Colby and five grandsons. She is buried in Pulpit Rock Cemetery.

Bertha K. Sanborn, 99, died Jan. 21, 2010. She was born Nov. 6, 1910 in South Waterford the daughter and only child of Charles and Ardell Kimball. She attended local schools in Waterford and graduated from Bridgton Academy in 1929. She attended Gorham



Teachers College where she received her teaching certificate and taught school for a short period of time. She then married Charles B. Sanborn of Waterford, on Oct. 26, 1931 and became a full-time homemaker. Bertha and Charles soon moved to Bridgton and bought the only home they ever owned at 5 Cottage Street, which Bertha still maintained as her residence. Bertha and Charles had one child, a son, Wayne G. Sanborn, who was a longtime City Manager of DeLand, Fla. in the 1960s, 1970s and most of the 1990s. Bertha worked as a dental assistant in Bridgton, for many years for longtime dentist, Dr. Fred Noble, and later Dr. Ron Hatch before retiring in 1980. She attended the First Congregational Church in Bridgton and was a longtime member of the Friendship Class there. Bertha was predeceased in 1963 by her husband, Charlie, a longtime mechanic and auto repairman in Bridgton. Bertha is survived by her son of DeLand, Fla.; four grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. She is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.

Reid H. Grover, 76, of North Waterford died Jan. 25, 2010 at his North Waterford residence. He was born in Waterford June 13, 1933, the son of Mahlon and Clara (Pike) Grover. He was educated in North Waterford schools and attended Bridgton Academy. On Oct. 20, 1956, he married the former Sylvia Johnson. He served in the U.S. Army in Korea. After coming home from the military, he worked at the North Waterford Spool Mill, Wilner Wood Products, Saunders Bros. in Bridgton and retired from Forrest Industries in Fryeburg. He served the town of Waterford in the fire department since 1947, serving as fire chief of that department for many years and was its oldest member. He is survived by two sons, Bradley and Michael Grover of Waterford; a sister, Donna and husband, Peter Dunn of Norway; one granddaughter; four great-grandchildren; half brothers Stan and Liston Brown; half sister, Marguerite; brother Richard; sister Althea Rich; and several nieces and nephews. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.



James W. Hamlin, 60, of Naples, died Feb. 17, 2010, at his home. He was born in Norway, July 13, 1949, the son of Albert and Gertrude Hamlin and educated in Waterford schools. He graduated from Oxford Hills High School in 1967 before graduating first in his class at Central Maine Vocational Technical Institute in Auburn two years later. Jim was a self-employed general contractor. Surviving are his wife of 35 years, Belinda of Naples; son, Ryan, of Casco; daughter, Kelly Jean, of Naples; four brothers, Gary of Harrison, Ronald of Waterford, Mark of Denmark and Warren of Norway; and two sisters, Sharon of Waterford and Charlene of California. He is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.



Anita (Pike) Bradley, 61, of North Waterford died Feb. 25, 2010 at her residence. She was born Dec. 11, 1948, to Richard and Frances (Alexander) Jones. She was a 1967 graduate of Oxford Hills High School. She worked as a shoe cutter in various shoe shops and drove a dump truck as well as a concrete truck for many years. She is survived by her parents of North Waterford; children, Coleen Toothaker of North Waterford, Missy Kenny of South Paris, James Pike of Oxford and Enid Cummings of North Waterford; 12 grandchildren; two brothers, Wallace Jones of North Waterford and Louis Jones of Milo; two sisters, Richarda Bisson of Poland, Ohio, and Ruth Ann Lavois of Poland. She is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Reta M. St. John, 83, of Harrison died March 20, at the Maine Veterans' Home. She was born in Waterford Oct. 8, 1926, the daughter of Clayton and Grace (Skinner) Pike. She graduated from Bridgton Academy in 1945. She married George H. St. John of Harrison, her husband of 50 years, on April 21, 1946. She was the first female selectman in Harrison and served as the election warden for many years. She was a lifetime member of the Ronald G. St. John Post 9328 Ladies Auxiliary, William I. Pembroke Post 139 American Legion Ladies Auxiliary and the Harrison Fire Association Auxiliary. She was also a Gold Star Mother. She is survived by her children, Dale C. St. John of Alton, N.H., James E. St. John of South Paris, Betty M. Hazelton of Harrison, Wanda J. May of Harrison and Richard K. St. John of Harrison; five sisters, Lelia Hill, Ruth O'Brien, Laura Richardson, Elizabeth Adams, and Eva Thurlow; a brother, Herbert Pike; 13 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, George, in 1996; son, Ronald, in 1966 in Vietnam; and siblings John, Wendell, Robert and Fred Pike and Edith Monk. She is buried in the Harrison Village Cemetery.



Margaret D. Bell, 85, died April 2, 2010 at Chase Point Assisted Living in Damariscotta. She was born in Enfield, N.C., in 1924, the daughter of Richard D. Dozier and Mary Aycock Dozier. While working for Western Union in Rocky Mount, she met Donald Bell, a Marine MP from Maine, who was stationed at Camp Lejeune and married him in 1945. She was warmly welcomed by Donald's large family when they moved back to Maine. She and Don had four children and over the years the family lived in Norway, Auburn, Bath, Manchester and Winthrop as Don's career with Central Maine Power required. She began working as a secretary in the schools when the family lived in Bath. She continued at the Manchester Grammar School and then as secretary to the headmaster at Kents Hill School. While in Manchester, she was involved with the Manchester Community Church and served as church treasurer for several years. Don and Margaret bought the family farm in South Waterford from Don's parents and spent countless weekends and vacations there, tending a large garden and the tree farm Don's father had begun. After Don's death in 1989, she moved near her eldest daughter in Brunswick and lived there for 15 years, before moving to Chase Point Assisted Living. She is survived by son, Steve of Norway; daughter, Sharon Bell of Brunswick; daughter Dozier Bell of Waldoboro; son, John Bell of South Waterford; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother, Richard D. Dozier Jr. of Mt. Morris, Mich. She is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery.



Barry W. Hill, 63, of Norway, and Lehigh Acres, Fla., died on April 7, at Lee Memorial Hospital, Fort Myers, FL from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident a few days earlier. He was born in Norway, Aug. 31, 1946, the son of Derwood H. and Lelia A. (Pike) Hill. He graduated from Oxford Hills High School, served in the Navy during the Vietnam Conflict and owned Barry Hill Construction and Carpentry in Norway. He has worked on numerous homes and other projects from Maine to Hawaii. He is survived by his wife of 24 years, Joan E. (Hemingway) Hill; children, Alan W. Hill of Norway and Lecia Curtis of Auburn; stepson Timothy Packard of Oxford; his mother, Lelia A. Hill, of Norway; brothers, Dan of South Paris and Scott Hill of Norway; and four grandchildren. He was predeceased by his father, Derwood H. Hill.



From the Building Survey:

The Sylvester-Monroe Cottage

When we began our house-by-house history of Waterford with questionnaires, we heard right away from John and Candace Monroe of California about their family cottage at 217 Waterford Road (under Bear Mountain, with the day lilies.)

This house was acquired by my grandfather, Charles B. Sylvester MD of Harrison, in about 1914. Family tradition relates that it was part of a debt for medical care. The previous owner I believe was a York. (I have all the old deeds somewhere and will be glad to research them if anyone is interested.) The house was an old farmhouse and has been there at least since the early 1800s as it appears on a map dated 1820. The old split granite foundation is still proudly evident in the basement. The surrounding property is grown-up farmland with the old pasture walls running through the woods.

Dr. Sylvester remodeled the old house for speculation to sell as a summer camp. Basically it is a three-bedroom house with a sleeping porch entirely open to outside visible on the front second story. His specialty was tuberculosis and he believed fresh air, even in winter, was beneficial! A similar sleeping porch is still present on the old Sylvester residence in Harrison at the junction of Dawes Hill road and the Norway road.

Because of difficult roads and winter access, he then sold his existing summer camp across Bear Pond (The property now owned by Ned Strauss' mother) and used the 217 Waterford Road house as the family summer camp. It was so beloved by his four children (one of them being my mother Miriam Sylvester Monroe) that they kept the place in the family and it has passed by inheritance to me. My wife and I, though living in California, and my children and grandchildren, living out of Maine, still come every summer.

The house has had some relatively minor remodeling and additions since the major remodel in 1914. We have photos of the place dating back to the 20s but none prior to its 1914 remodeling. The photos essentially show it to be unchanged. My grandmother, Mary Whitney Sylvester, wished to have a garage so at some time in the 20s had the red garage built or relocated across the road.*

Needless to say, we have no plans to sell the house and hopefully it will remain in our family for a long time. For Waterford historians, I should mention that my Waterford side of the family – Monroes, Athertons and Plummers – have owned many properties in Waterford over the years. Most notably the “Bear Mt. Inn” at the head of Bear Pond, the old Monroe Tannery (in ruins) along City Brook, and what we call “The Atherton Farm” at the top of Mill Hill on the left. Subsequently the latter became known as “The Marr Place” where Mary Andrews lived as a child. Grandmother Mary Whitney Sylvester grew up on the Edward K. Whitney Farm in Harrison, locally known for advanced farming techniques of the time.

** Journals of W. K. Hamlin include mention of his having the garage moved to the Sylvester Cottage sometime in 1925.*

Oral History tapes of Miriam Monroe include her telling a wonderful story about Dr. Sylvester's fumigation of the house after someone had died there of an infectious disease. Before he had it remodeled he doused it with formaldehyde and had it closed up for a year!



Photo by Bill Haynes

Please send more House Histories to WHS!

Waterford Historical Society
PO Box 201
Waterford ME 04088

