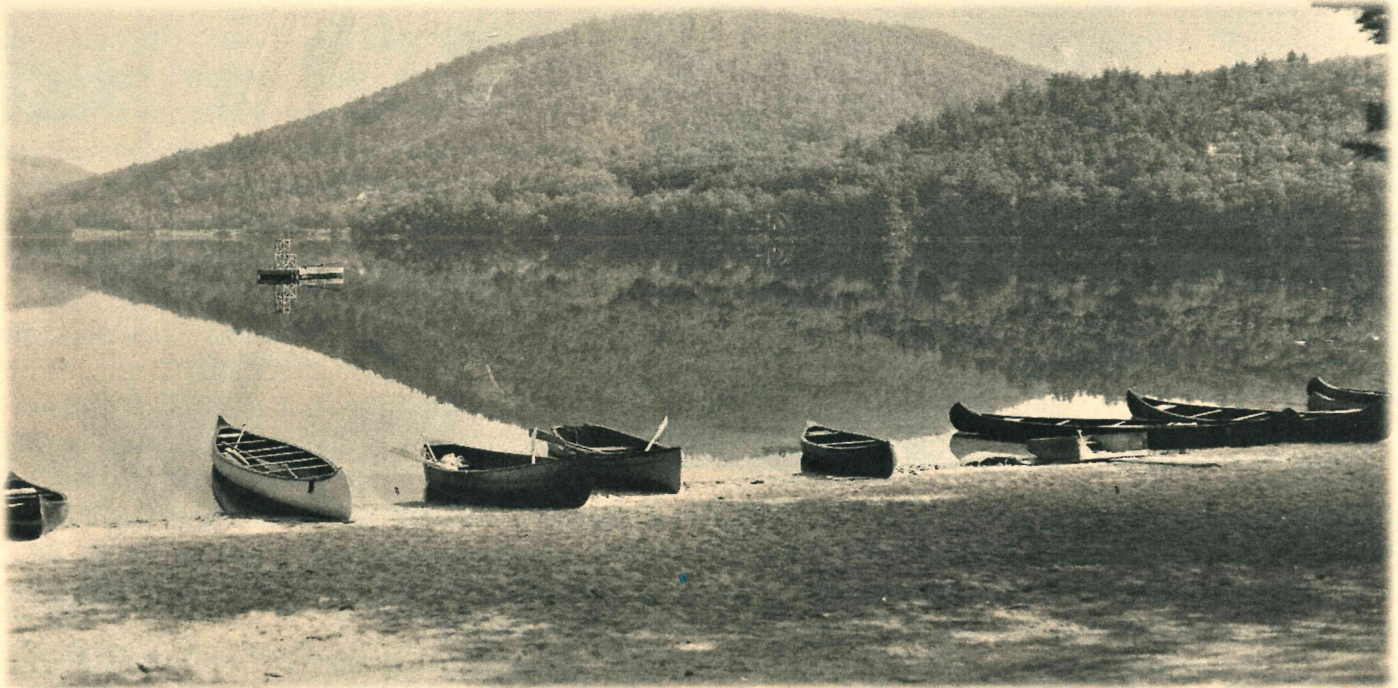


Waterford Echoes

Issue 73

Fall/Winter 2021

Waterford Historical Society



Above, a view of Keoka Lake, probably taken before the advent of motorboats; photo a gift of the Shrivvers. The aerial postcard view below is Waterford Flat ca. 1980.

The Summer of Keoka

In 1971, a group of dedicated property owners on the lake banded together to solve the problems of dam repair and water quality. In 2021, the Keoka Lake Association (KLA) celebrated its 50th anniversary with a spectacular book, Keoka Lake: A History of Life On Our Lakes.

Primarily organized by Charlie Tarbell, Nancy Eaton and Brenda Hamblen, the book

(continued on page 5)



Installing the Dam



A volunteer team of 28 worked long hours to get the dam installed.

A Tour Along City Brook

Our October program was a bust, though the afternoon was mild and the foliage was beautiful. It was to have started at the dam on Keoka Lake and continued along the foundation stones of historic mills in City Brook, past Watson's Falls down to the former location of the carding mill now at Old Sturbridge, Massachusetts.

The dam controls the flow of water out of the lake, down the brook toward Bear Pond. Originally it was for running as many as 14 mills at different times; now it is more for preservation and fire protection. The Mason Dam (named for Moria Mason and her son Charles) is featured in the book Keoka Lake. Under the protection of the KLA today, the newest dam was built in 2005.

Kilton and Andy Tabor undertook the coffer dam as an Eagle Scout project and Charles Mason formally donated the land in 2021. It follows a long progression of projects beginning in 1808 when the earthen and granite Whitney Dam was

built on the brook to run a gristmill. Hill & Marr and Cobb & Hapgood were two later iterations of that mill.

In 1952 a concrete structure was built at the lake, next to a warming shack which had been built for ice cutting days and which later became Stan Hamlin's Boathouse. In recent years, neighbor Glen Merrill maintained the sluiceway and a steel gate was added. The state inspects the site regularly.

City Brook (also known as Mill Brook) is the only outlet of Keoka, and its many mills became the reason South Waterford was known as "The City." Today, only two buildings survive *in situ*.

There are three descriptive markers along the brook, and we thank Bob Spencer for being willing to talk about his Watson's Falls mill home. No one came to the program, but we hope to try again in 2022 because the Friends of City Brook have continued the trail beyond the Haynes chicken house and eventually to Bear Pond.

Waterford Echoes

phone: (207) 583-8335

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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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 Visit www.waterfordme.org/WatHistSoc
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 Waterford Historical Society
 PO Box 201
 Waterford ME 04088

We have the following publications for sale at \$10 each: "History of Waterford 1775-1875;" "History of Waterford 1875-1976;" "This is Waterford 1803-2003" (reduced price). Add \$8 to ship one book, or \$12 to ship two or three books.



The "old red mill," at various times a furniture and woodenware factory, a barbershop and even an apartment, was one of the last to disappear from City Brook. There are few pictures of it, but we recently found this one. The stable to the right still exists at Werner Park.

Appreciations

We would like to thank Skipp and Judy Green for allowing us to see the Warren House in North Waterford, one of the oldest unchanged houses in town.

We give thanks to Joy Plate and Gail Levine, who have spent hours re-organizing and filing in the research room. In addition, Joy and Henry Plate gifted us with prints done by artist George Elliott, which led us to an interesting program on Mr. Elliott and his service in the WWII Merchant Marine. Thank you to his daughter Barbara Buckley, who brought an incredible ship model made by her father. It was also great to see his McWain friends and neighbors.

Thanks go to Ellen Kingman and Judy Haynes for photos and other memorabilia we have not seen before. Also, we appreciate John Wait and Charlie Tarbell for all the lifting and carrying they do around town!

We appreciate Andy & Diane Dabczynski, who have enthusiastically taken on computerizing our records. Also, we hope to repeat a wonderful musical heritage program which Andy organized with Greg Boardman. Thanks to Nancy Eaton for directing people with questions and to Ralph MacKinnon for "keeping the home fires burning!" In particular, thank him for the new ramp at the Rice Museum.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND that we have an opening for a paid MUSEUM DOCENT for next summer. Do you know anyone? Maybe a student, a teacher, a visiting grandchild, or a retiree with time on their hands? Please drop us a line or mention suggestions to Nancy Eaton at Waterford Library.

Nuances

Family Camping at Keoka Beach

by Nancy Chute Marcotte

In 1959, the heirs of Harry and Carrie Haynes bought 75 acres of the Atherton/Hamlin Farm (later Marr's and Anderson's), including a beautiful 1200-foot white sandy shore called "Bessie's Beach" (from their cousin Bessie Hamlin Hill.) They were Mildred and Haynes Noyes, Bill and Diane Haynes and Ruth and Glenn Chute.

The siblings had grown up hosting summer visitors as boarders. [See This Is Waterford.] They decided to build a campground, starting with 50 tent sites, a public beach, and a store called "The Wangan" (named for logging crew supply stores in the Maine woods.)

They contacted Steve Wilson from North Waterford to build a road in along Sucker Brook. They cut as few trees as possible and opened in 1960. The buildings, as well as hundreds of picnic tables, were constructed by another relative, Roy Meserve.

The six owners and their eight children (including me!), along with other local people, ran the campground and increased the number of sites and buildings until 1978, when it was sold to the Copelands and the Bailots. Today, Keoka Beach is owned by the Searles family.

Glenn Chute, my dad, insisted that there be a superior septic system built uphill, far away from the lake to protect the water quality. He joined the new Keoka Lake Association (KLA) and kept an eye on the City Brook Dam at the far edge of the property. The new Keoka Lake book contains the history of the campground.

(see photos page 4)



One of the identifying iconic features of Keoka Beach at the beginning was the Leaning Tree, pictured above on a postcard. It was perfect for climbing until it became too dangerous and had to come down.

The snapshots below show Glenn Chute, his son Alan, and Steve Raasumaa cutting the tree down in 1976.



Keoka Summer

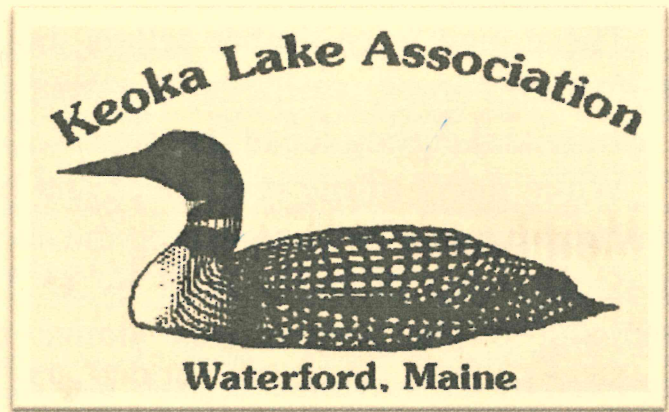
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contains geology, pre-history, history, architecture, original artwork and many photographs and maps. Books are for sale at Waterford Library and the WHS museum.

A glacially-formed body of water, Keoka is part of the Long Lake and Sebago watershed. It was originally called Thomas Pond—named for soldier Thomas Chamberlain and his mythical escape from Pequawket Indians under a rock on the far shore. The name “Keoka” (perhaps meaning “abounding in pine”) was probably assigned in late 19th Century as our lakes began to attract tourists. We don't know how or why or who re-named it, but town chronicler Flora Abbott always said it was considered “tonier” by someone.

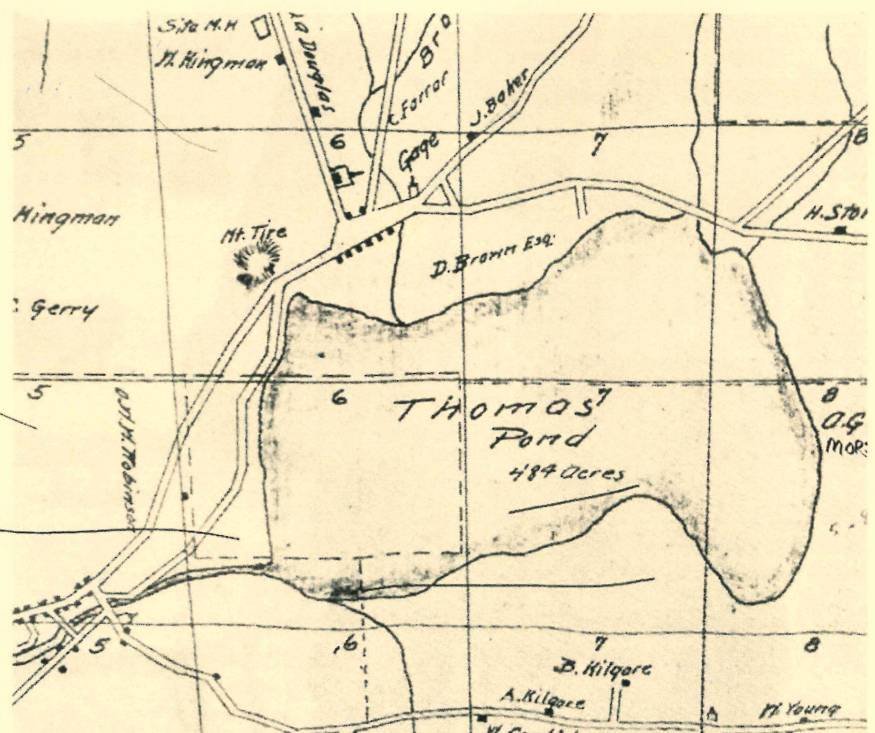
Early in the settlement of the town, the farmlands around the lakes and streams were used largely for pastured animals. By 1850 when Daniel Chaplin made this map, a handful of second-generation investors owned all the land around Thomas Pond. They were: Daniel Brown, Benjamin Kilgore, Augustus Morse, O'Neil Robinson, Hiram Stone and Moses Young.

(continued on page 6)



The Early Shoreowners

Waterford was fifty years old when Daniel Chaplin drew this map in 1850. Early settlers had come and gone, while homesteads frequently passed hands as fortunes changed or as their children intermarried. Shorelands of the flat and northside were owned by farmers out of necessity. Legal water rights to brooks and streams were frequently shared. Brooks were valued for providing water to crops and livestock as well as power to the mills.



Keoka Summer

(continued from page 5)

These men were timber sellers, house builders and entrepreneurs who began manufactories and sawmills on the Waterford streams. The lakes remained primarily for fishing and cutting ice at that time.

While many of the residences and barns in the Flat backed up to the lake, the first actual summer cottages facing the shore were built in the early 20th Century. The first cottage was probably built by C. D. Morse in 1907 for the Parkers (today "Kokosing"). The second was almost certainly "Bird's Nest" on Rocky Point, completed by C. D. Morse in 1909 for Dr. Edward Starbird.

These early summer cottages were designed in Craftsman style, an aesthetic popular at the beginning of the rustic movement. Nancy Eaton has written about it well in the new book. Others which you can read about include "Konewago" (1911-15), "Egmont (1911), "Aloha" (1913) and perhaps the Lodge at Camp Wigwam on Bear Pond. C. D. Morse built at least some of them and big fireplaces were often built by William and A. F. Kingman.

At right: Bird's Nest, on Rocky Point. Once Pearl Starbird's home, it is now owned by Bill and Lisa Eaton.



Below left: Egmont, on Keoka's northern shore, built by C. D. Morse in 1911 for Josias Monroe. Ownership has changed several times in the past 110 years. Egmont has been owned by Al Swonger since 1976.



Below: A vintage photo of the main cabin (of four) at Camp Konewago. Margaret Carson purchased the property circa 1919-20, for use as a girls' camp and later a family camp. From 1947-2003, it was the summer home for the Carson & Butler families. Chris Lingamfelter bought Konewago in 2003.



In Memoriam



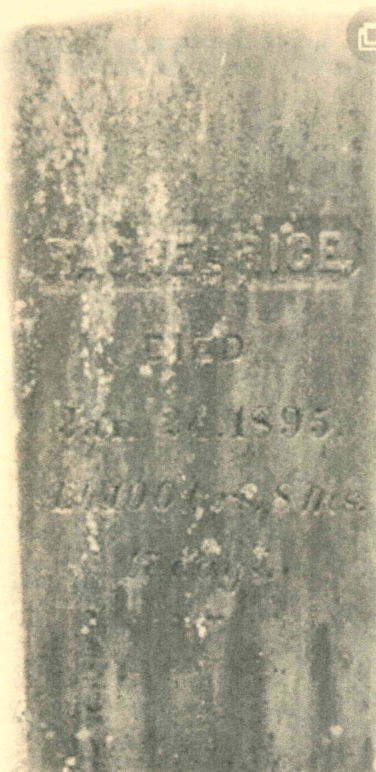
Edward R. Niemi of Norway, ME, passed away September 15, 2021 at Androscoggin Hospice House in Auburn. He was born October 17, 1933, in Norway, ME, the son of Arvo and Gladys (Damon) Niemi. Edward attended schools in Waterford and Norway. He farmed more than 100 acres in Waterford and operated a farmstand in Bridgton for many years. In later years, he started a woodworking business, making Adirondack chairs, window boxes and other products to sell on eBay and local businesses. Ed's community involvement included being a member of the local 4-H Club for many years in his youth; a former member of Bear Mountain Grange in Waterford; and a member of the Appeals Board in Stoneham. One of Ed's proudest and most-recognized contributions was to the sport of stock car racing. He raced primarily at Oxford Plains Speedway in Oxford, ME for over 20 years, beginning his racing career at age 16. Along with his wife Lois Niemi, Edward received the Pioneers and Veterans Award – special recognition for significant contribution – from the Maine Motor Sports Hall of Fame. Many knew him as the “flying farmer.” He is survived by daughters Diane Mowatt and husband Timothy of Windham, and Donna Heyne and husband Kent of Texas. Also, grandchildren James Niemi and wife Jodi of Pownal, ME, and Angela Mowatt of Gorham; great-grandchildren Jack and Edward; his sisters Marian Paine of Norway and Anna Wadsworth of Oxford. Edward was predeceased by his wife Lois, sister Helen Edmunds, and parents Arvo and Gladys Niemi.

Deborah J. Rose Noyes, 68, of Sneads Ferry, NC, died at her home on April 21, 2021. She grew up in Kennebunk, ME, and graduated from Kennebunk High School in 1971. Debbie married Robert Noyes of Waterford on February 24, 1972. They lived in Auburn, Sabattus and Waterford, ME, and later New Jersey. She is survived by two sons, Chris and Mat, and two grandchildren, Brady and Holden. Debbie was pre-deceased in 2012 by her husband, Bob Noyes.

An Eyewitness to History

(continued from page 8)

Rachel Rice apparently had her picture taken once a year (at least after the development of photography ca. 1840) and the charming one below at left is from 1893 when she was 99 years old. The photo below at right was taken by G. F. Stone of “Stone and Bartlett Artists and Photographers of Norway Maine.” The cake says, “100 Years Old Today.” She never married and was reported in “quite good health” at age 100. Rachel died on January 24, 1895 and is buried in Elm Vale Cemetery, South Waterford, ME. She was 100 years, 8 months, 17 days old.



Miss Rachel Rice, pictured here on her 100th birthday, was born May 7, 1794 in the house where she always lived. On our 1880 map it is labelled “Misses R. and S. Rice” on Rice Road.

From Our Files

Rachel Rice: An Eyewitness to History

Eber Rice was the 7th settler in Waterford. Born in Westborough, MA on April 5, 1764, he and his wife, Rebecca Gamwell Rice, came from Northborough, MA in 1785. Our first history book tells us that their daughters, Rachel, born April 7, 1794, and Sophia, born in 1798, were both still living at the time of the Centennial of Waterford.

Eber was a farmer, surveyor, justice of the peace and teacher. Opposed to separation of Maine, he had served in the Massachusetts legislature.

His son Eber (b. 1792) married Elizabeth Frye and settled near his father on "the old farm." They had seven children: John, Mary Ann, Sarah (m. Millett), William, Louisa, Charles and George [see the map]. The Rice property is still in the family today, and the names have continued through the generations.

(continued on page 7)



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