



Waterford Echoes

Issue 74

Spring/Summer 2022

Waterford Historical Society

A Lake House Story

The big white hotel in the middle of Waterford Village is a very familiar reminder of the days of Waterford's ascendancy as a tourist location. Though closed today, it has been a tavern, a hydropathic spa, a restaurant and a private home at various times.

The very location of the Lake House centers the village. In 1797 Eli Longley, who created the common in the first place, moved his tavern business down the hill from a log cabin to a new frame building. There was no other building on the "Flat" at that time.

That original building is today the ell for a bigger five-bay structure which was probably built after Longley sold his tavern to Peter Warren and went west in 1817, discouraged by the "year without a summer," 1816, when every month saw a frost. The style is basically Federal, from the mid-nineteenth century, with later Italianate "icing" trim which coincides with the late-nineteenth century period of progress, growth, and commercial travelers.

Just after Maine statehood in 1820 was a time of growth for the next twenty years or more, when much of Waterford was developed. Eli Longley repented of his move west and tried to buy back his tavern, to no avail. He ended up in Raymond, Maine. The tavern changed hands, with subsequent owners being Dominicus Frost, Deacon Henry Houghton, William Brown, and his son-in-law George Kimball.

Gracious living on the front porch of the Lake House, ca, 1900, The woman is identified as Harriet Knight. Note the siding painted brown.



By the late century, the embellished building was painted brown with white trim. It sported a Victorian stair tower and a gazebo, with a covered walkway which connected it to the Annex, remodeled at that time from a store into lodging rooms. It was not at that time called the Lake House, which was the name of another hotel that burned.

Calvin Farrar

In the meanwhile, a young boy had been growing up in Waterford who would take the building to its next big development. Born in 1814, Calvin Farrar was the son of Calvin and Bathsheba Bates Farrar. One of his siblings—his sister Caroline—became the mother of famous writer Charles Farrar Brown ("Artemus Ward").

The younger Calvin was a Phi Beta Kappa teacher and lecturer who attended Bowdoin and Harvard Divinity School. Like his nephew Charles, he never married. He was known as pro-temperance and anti-slavery. Sickly in his 30s, he had an experience that shaped him; he discovered a hydropathic cure in Brattleboro, Vermont. Hydropathy (water cure) was popular in Germany and England and came to be considered "a boon to mankind."

In 1847 Calvin bought the inn and annex and arranged for Dr. E. A. Kittredge to come from Lynn, Massachusetts to run a new hydropathic spa in the aptly named Waterford, Maine. *Continued on pg. 4*

The President's Corner

The Summer Schedule

The Trustees met via Zoom all winter to plan our meeting schedule for 2022. It is as follows:

June 9 – Our Annual Meeting, at which one-third of our Trustees will be elected. (Officers are then elected at July Trustee meeting.) It will be a house tour of the Waterford Inn on Chadbourne Road in East Waterford at 6:30 p.m.

July 4 – Usually has us opening the Mary Gage Rice Museum and the Town House Museum for visitors.

July 7 – Meeting will celebrate Heritage Music by Greg Boardman and friends with a focus on dance cards and contra dancing. It will be at the World's Fair Dance Hall from 6 to 9 p.m. The admission is free, but a collection will be taken to benefit Waterford World's Fair. Last year's event drew a large and enthusiastic crowd.

August 11 – WHS joins Friends of City Brook for a tour of mill sites, including a new section near the former corn shop/chicken house in memory of Bill (Dood) Haynes, near the 73rd anniversary of his birth. It starts at Werner Park at 2:00 p.m.

Sept. 8 – WHS will have an Open House at the Town House Museum and would like to have you come tour our collections and see what we have in our files.

Oct. 13 – We will display our collection of school photos and memorabilia. We ask you to come and share your school memories at the Wilkins House at 6:30 p.m.

Nov. 10 – Will be a Veterans Program by Bob Plate, sharing articles and letters from his great-grandfather in WWI. This is a very moving program at 6:30 at the Wilkins House.

With the exception of the music program, these are all volunteer experiences and open to change. In deference to the pandemic which will not go away, we have a masks-optional policy and we are preparing a Facebook presence and an e-mail notification list to notify members and others of any last-minute changes.

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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.

OFFICERS

President:	Bonnie Parsons
Vice-President:	Nancy Eaton
Secretary:	Nancy Marcotte
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	Henry and Joy Plate
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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Classification: Individual/Couple
Life Member: \$100/\$150 – Annual \$10/\$15
Seniors (65 & older) - \$5/\$8
Membership renewals are due June 1st
Membership dues help to fund our newsletter and its mailing costs
Visit www.waterfordme.org/WatHistSoc
or the Facebook page of the Waterford Library
Send Checks To: 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.

Nuances

Mumbo Jumbo

by Nancy Chute Marcotte

There was a time when Waterford people put on plays quite often—for Winter Carnival or for Bear Mt. Community Club, for instance. Either three-act plays or a couple of one-acts would be put on, usually between a supper and a dance, and they would raise funds for things like the fire department, the Grange or the school.

It was winter 1976 or spring 1977 when I directed a 3-act murder mystery/farce at the Bear Mt. Grange Hall. Mumbo-Jumbo was one of those 1940s-era stories of disparate travelers stranded in a country house on a stormy night. My daughter Tracy (age 7) performed her first stage role as the little girl who accidentally solves the mystery. It was a lot of fun.

The Bill Haynes newspaper photo below shows some of the large cast: Clara Hamlin as “Mrs. Custer,” Tom Briggs as “Dr. Omahandra,” and Mary Briggs as showgirl “Peaches Greeding.” The characters included a West Indian mystic, some college students and two competing sheriffs.

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Haynes chicken house ca. 1950's (formerly corn shop)

E-Mail Notifications/Updates List:

We are updating our contact information. All members, please email your name and **preferred email address** (and any other contact updates) to:

WaterfordMeHistoricalSociety@gmail.com

Having your current email address will help us to quickly send along information regarding our monthly programs, including possible changes in dates, times or locations and Waterford Historical Society news.

Thank you!

We are always looking for new members. Please see our masthead on page 2 for information on joining the society. **Membership makes good gifts to friends and family members.** Members receive two newsletters a year.

NUANCES *cont. from page 3*

This play provided me an eerie experience. At the time, I was cataloguing the thousands of un-alphabetized books in what was the Bear Mt. Library in South Waterford, whenever I could.

We had ordered the playbooks new from a catalogue and included was a footnote that said we could find out more about voodoo rituals by consulting the book The Magic Island by W. B. Seabrook (1929). Yeah, right.

The next time I went into the library, I walked up to a previously untouched section of books, took a colorful tome from the shelf and—cue the eerie music—found the aforementioned obscure volume on voodoo!

I turned around and went home!

A very sad memento in the Waterford Historical Society collection:

A letter from “M. J. S. Porter” to “Dear Husband [Oliver]“

It reads: *If my agony should tempt me to commit suicide, don't grieve for me, for if I don't I shall have to be bound hand and foot, and I feel that I could not endure that agony.*

I try to put my trust in God. When I awoke this morning at 3 o'clock in great suffering I repeated: “though I walk through the dark vally [sic] of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Thy rod and staff they comfort me.”

I know you will forgive me my transgressions—I feel they have been more of the head than of the heart,

Kiss all the dear children for me and believe me your loving wife in time and eternity.

On the back there is a P.S.: *Do not reflect on yourself for not staying more with me than you have for I*

A LAKE HOUSE STORY *cont. from page 1*

Known as “Kit,” Dr. Kittredge was no stranger to the state; he had been to Bowdoin and he married Susan Smith from Paris, Maine. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, renowned educational crusader associated with Horace Mann, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bronson Alcott, spread the word about the beauty of Waterford's lakes and mountains, where she had visited. [See This Is Waterford book for her description.] She wrote letters to newspapers extolling the water cure in Waterford.

The Waterford Hydropathic Institute (later the Maine Hygienic Institute) opened in May of 1847. It cost \$6.00 per week. Patients were to bring their own blankets, sheets and coarse towels. It was relatively easy to get here from Massachusetts. One patient, Aurora Stimson Porter, described it in a letter to her husband Oliver back in Lynn, Mass. [July 29, 1847.]

“The cars arrived at Portland about 10 and we at the Elm Hotel at a quarter past 10... We accordingly had our names booked to Waterford and took lodging... Took breakfast about 5 a.m. And started from Portland about [5:30 a.m.] “Aurora and her sister Relief Long rode the stagecoach until they stopped for a dinner break and then arrived in Waterford by bedtime. Both ladies were feeling ill. [The Elm Hotel on Federal Street was headquarters for the Maine Stage Co. which served Waterford.]

The Porter Family

Surviving letters between Aurora Porter and her husband Oliver, a storekeeper back in Massachusetts, make a very clear picture of what life was like in the hydropathic institute and the annex next door. They make up a large portion of the book The Waterford Water Cure by Q. David Bowers.

Four children were back at home with their father and an Irish housekeeper and various family



Left: The Oliver Porter Family, in front of the [Gage] house. Oliver Porter is the man with white beard seated near the tree. His son Horace is at the right, seated on the ground with a dog, and directly behind him in the straw hat is Huntington Porter. Laura Porter Kimball is fifth from the right and there are other Kimballs in the photo, which was given by Alice Flagg.

Below: Lake House, Tower and Annex

picking berries. There were occasional lectures and concerts, like one held at the Universalist Church in "the City." Aurora came to Waterford in July and stayed in "Farrar's house." She expected to stay six months to a year but by October her husband wanted her home and she felt she could get as much benefit wrapping herself in wet sheets at home.

But the next summer (1848) she came back, and Oliver set about moving the whole family to Waterford. He bought the Gage House and the store. However, Aurora died in January of 1849.

In December of that same year Oliver was married again, to Mary Jane Seal of Westbrook. They had one son, Horace, but Mary Jane died in March of 1861 [see sidebar on page 4 about her farewell letter.]

Wife #3 was Betsey Hammond of Paris in 1864. She died in 1875, leaving three stepchildren to the Porter establishment. Oliver still owned his property when the 1880 map was drawn. He died in Waterford in 1886. All are buried in Elm Vale Cemetery. [The Gage family eventually got the house back in their family.]

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In Memoriam

Edith Tower Kimball, age 89, Waterford, ME, died November 21, 2021. She was born November 17, 1932, the eldest daughter of Clayton and Christine Tower of Sweden, ME. On September 23, 1950, Edith married Prentiss Kimball of Waterford, and together they raised three children: David, Sheree, and Doreen. One of Edith's life accomplishments was working many years for the United States Post Office as a clerk, and then as Postmaster of South Waterford (1978–1995). She and Prentiss owned and operated Kimball's Hardware in South Waterford. She was pre-deceased by two of her children – Sheree Fortier in 2005 and David in 2020. Edith is survived by her husband of 71 years, her daughter Doreen Johnson, five grandsons, several great-grandchildren, and her sisters Alice and Irene.



Merle E. Grover, 77, died December 16, 2021, at his home in Waterford. Born in Lewiston on September 14, 1944, to Robert L. and Ava L. (McKeen) Grover, he graduated from Oxford Hills High School in 1963. Merle was in the United States Air Force for 21 years in Aircraft Maintenance. After that he was an over the road truck driver for 4-½ years and then employed at Bethel Furniture. Merle enjoyed NASCAR, the Red Sox and the Patriots. He also enjoyed wood working, carpentry, camping, and loved all animals. He is survived by his wife Betty Grover, stepson Robby J. Howard and wife Jennifer. He was predeceased by his parents and a brother, Raymond Grover.



Gordon F. Knight, 92, died Jan. 19, 2022. He was born in Otisfield, ME, on Feb. 4, 1929, to Adelbert and Alice (Lamb) Knight. A 1948 graduate of Bridgton Academy, he there met Virginia Gammon of Waterford. They married July 9, 1951 and enjoyed 70-1/2 years together. Gordon entered the Army and got a leave just long enough to get married before a tour-of-duty in Europe. After the Army, he drove logging trucks and maintained logging equipment. He also worked for A. W. Walker, and Ripley and Fletcher. He worked many years repairing John Deere tractors and equipment. Gordon and Virginia were Co-Presidents of the Swinging Bears Square Dance Club. He was pre-deceased by his parents and sister Olive Shane. He is survived by his wife, sons George, Richard, and Stephen of Waterford, and son Michael and wife Kathy of Gardiner, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild. More at sunjournal.com.



Richard E. Merrill, 77, of Concord, NH, died at home on February 8th, surrounded by his loving family. Born in South Waterford, ME June 11, 1944, a son of Edgar and Margaret (Bell) Merrill. He married Cynthia Read in 1967 and they raised two children. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, his daughter Sarah Bragg (Rick), son John (Meghan), four grandchildren, six brothers and seven sisters and their families. Dick attended Waterford Memorial School and graduated from Oxford Hills High School in 1962. He graduated from Keene State College in 1966 and earned a Masters Degree in Occupational Education from the University of New Hampshire in 1975. His teaching career spanned 33 years. More at legacy.com/us/obituaries/concordmonitor.



Martha Belle Morse, 80, died February 9, 2022, with family by her side. Born in her grandparents' Fryeburg Harbor home on February 5, 1942, she was the daughter of Irving Morse and H. Louise Wales. Martha was a self-taught accountant; she also earned a degree in Tourism and Travel. Favorite activities included sewing and quilting, casino trips, lunch with Norway High School classmates (Class of 1960), family get-togethers, and traveling, especially to Hawaii. Martha is survived by her four children – Bobby Toothaker (Deborah) of Lynnville, TN; Brian Toothaker (Beth) of N. Waterford; Holly Weymouth of N. Waterford; Dawn Mutebi of Reston, VA. Also surviving are 17 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, and her sister, Ellen (Lou) Bernier of N. Waterford. She was pre-deceased by her parents, brothers Kenneth and Hollis, and grandson Jared Toothaker.

In Memoriam *continued*



Derek Gibson died March 13, 2022. Born in England on April 22, 1932, the son of David and Phoebe (Marshall) Gibson, he was the youngest of three children and was predeceased by his brother David and sister Doreen. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Margaret (Dale) Gibson; daughters Jayne Eversen of Florida, Ruth Kane (Chris) of New Jersey, and Emma Bodwell (Peter) of Waterford; four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Derek grew up in London, England. He earned an engineering degree and started his career with Ilford Limited, then enlisted in the Royal Navy. In 1967, he and Margaret migrated to the U.S., where he began his career with Boeing in Ridley Park, PA. In 1988, they moved to Waterford, ME and purchased the Kedarburn Inn, successfully owning and operating it for 30 years before selling it in 2018. Derek was an avid reader, loved classical musical, art, model trains, and photography. More at hallfuneralhome.net.



Julie-Ann (Miller) Hamlin died April 4th, 2022, after a long illness. Born August 23, 1949 to Marguerite Hall Miller Ferris and James Ernest Miller of New Jersey. In the United States Air Force, she earned National Certification as an Operating Room Technician, and was honorably discharged with the rank of E4 in July 1971. Julie lived in South Waterford, ME from 1973 to 1999. She worked many years for the Advertiser-Democrat as Assistant to the President, and Human Resources Director. Julie earned her Certificate in Human Resources from USM. After moving to MA, she worked for Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates. Julie is survived by son Aaron Hamlin of Danvers, MA; daughter Sonya Morey of Haverhill, MA; two grandsons; brothers John Miller, David (Stella) Miller, and Charles (Seren) Ferris; sister Barbara Ferris. She was pre-deceased by her parents, brother Jackie Miller and sister Jerri Miller Woodley.

A LAKE HOUSE STORY *cont. from page 5*

Dr. William Shattuck purchased the hydropathic institute in 1854 and advertised it as the Waterford Water Cure, the name often stamped on coins. He ran the business until 1887.

No one alive seems to remember when the newly named Lake House hotel was painted white, but we suspect it was in the Colonial Revival period circa the 1930s. The late Bill Fillebrown remembered it still being painted brown when he was a child. Larry and Alice Rounds took in guests in the building and for a while in the 1990s it was a fine restaurant opened and operated by Michael and Suzanne Uhl-Myers.

In the 21st Century, the closed building retains its charm and attracts much interest. Many wish it might someday be returned to its former glory.



The Lake House with garden, Waterford Village.

FROM OUR FILES



Climbing Mt. Tire'm

Among many articles left to Waterford Historical Society by Joan Bean Fillebrown were snapshots of summertime fun on the mountain.

At left are four children on the rocks atop Mt. Tire'm. At lower left we can see they are (from top to bottom) Joan Bean, Irene Millett, Mac Bean and Charlie Mason.

The larger photo below also includes Barbara Fillebrown and Bea Fitts. People have been climbing this trail for centuries; there apparently was an Observatory Platform built on Mt. Tire'm in the nineteenth century.



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