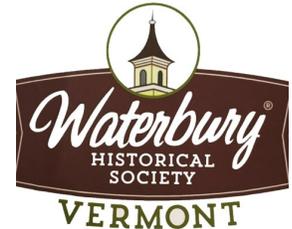


WATERBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SUMMER 2021

Volume 22, Number 2

Mourning Loss and Celebrating Life

WHS Remembers Those Who Have Made Our History Special

By Cheryl Casey, *President and Editor*

In the five years I have been publishing the newsletter, this issue has been the most difficult to finish. Only hours after I finished layout, but before I had a chance to send the file to print, I received the news that Jack Carter, our History Center curator and Board member, had suddenly passed away.

With our next issue not until September, I could not let this one go without acknowledging the veritable chasm that Jack's loss leaves in our Society. Already, these pages acknowledged the recent passing of three cherished members—Calvin Down, Judy Ather, and Sharon MacMahon. The idea of adding Jack not only felt surreal, but physically hurt.

And so I avoided the newsletter altogether for several days.

Finally, I gathered up my two dogs and my iPad and set off for the dog park. A couple of hours surrounded by joyfully-zooming dogs of all ages and sizes, in a community space built with as much love, care, and commitment as Jack brought to every project he did for the Historical Society (and there were so many), proved to be just the environment I needed to finally write.

There is hardly a board, commission, arts and culture committee, or community organization in town that won't have something to say about how Jack contributed to the success of their mission. For WHS, there isn't a single dimension of our work that won't feel his absence acutely.

From serving on the Board of Directors to planning speakers and presentations for the Program Committee, Jack tirelessly dedicated his time to bringing Waterbury history to life for residents and tourists alike. His vision and creativity garnered awards and recognition for WHS, including from the Vermont Historical Society's League of Local Museums & Historical Societies—awards of excellence for both the redesign of the Community Room at the Train Station and the Waterbury Women Exhibit and Video Series.

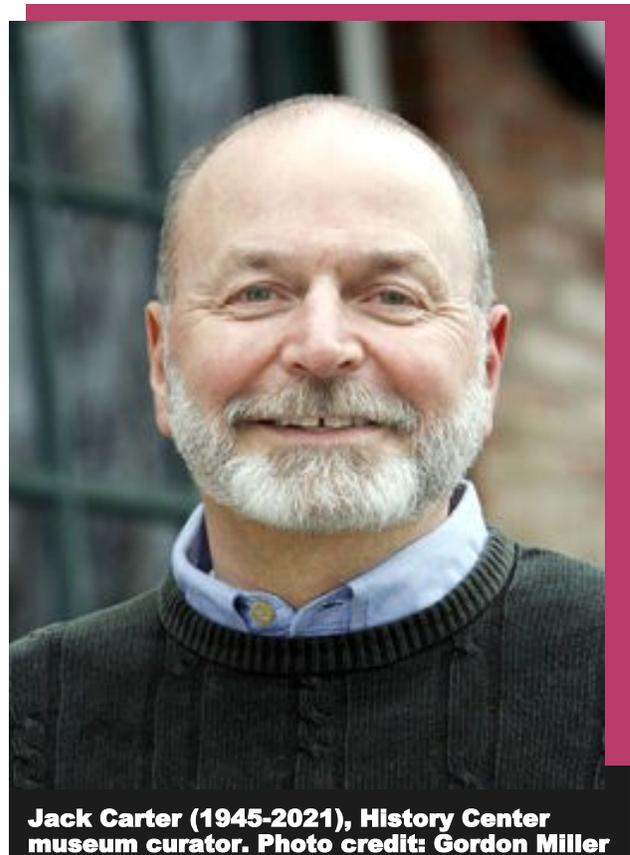
Nowhere, however, was Jack's reverence for Waterbury history more evident than in his curation of our collections for display. From our booth at the annual History Expo in Tunbridge to our little museum in the

municipal complex, Jack's displays were engaging and informative, crafted with a practiced, creative eye and an encyclopedic knowledge of Waterbury history. And there are so many artifacts still in storage, awaiting to be showcased by Jack's loving hand.

My time in Waterbury may be comparatively brief so far, but Jack taught me that one didn't have to be from Waterbury, or even spend decades in town, to chronicle, protect, and delight in its history.

Similarly, Calvin Dow, who passed away in mid-May at the age of 100, embraced and embodied the vitality of Waterbury's history. For some 20 years, he submitted at least one article and several photos to every newsletter issue. Calvin's reminiscences of growing up

Continued on page 2



Jack Carter (1945-2021), History Center museum curator. Photo credit: Gordon Miller

Commemorating Deceased Members of Waterbury

Continued from page 1

in Waterbury Center, and his stories of the India-Burma-China theater during WWII, comprise an important piece of our collection because he wrote so often of everyday life—the mundane activities, joys, and responsibilities of growing up in a rural community in central Vermont and then even the small comforts to be found while at war, like playing tennis in India with Hollywood actress Jinx Falkenberg and meeting Julia Child on the S. S. Mariposa.

Calvin's submissions were always something of an event for me because they were letters—handwritten, sent by post from his Danbury, Connecticut home, four times a year. Stickers celebrating nature, the environment, women's rights, and the general awesomeness of life always decorated his envelopes. The last envelope I received from him had stickers of "congratulations" on my being elected president of WHS. I will always remember that kindness.

Calvin wasn't just a longtime contributor to the newsletter; as a member for many years, Calvin was also generous to WHS. We are grateful for how he always remembered us, and we shall always remember him. Calvin's final submission can be read on page 4.

WHS recently learned of the December passing of member Judy (Lumbra) Ather, who graduated from Waterbury High School in 1955 and worked for a time at The Demeritt Company. Although a resident in Michigan since 1964, Judy and her husband Brad, also of Waterbury, maintained membership in WHS and regularly contributed to the Society.

We also lost Judy's sister, Sharon (Lumbra) MacMahan, in May. A 1957 graduate of Waterbury High School, Sharon was married to Clarence "Mac" MacMahon. They settled in Waterford, Vermont and were married for 51 years, until his death in 2013. Thoughtful, adventurous, and fun, Sharon was also committed to serving her community. Among many acts of generosity, Sharon maintained membership in WHS and knitted beanies for newborns at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury.

Several other members of Judy and Sharon's family remain in Waterbury and are part of our Historical Society. Our hearts mourn with them, Jack Carter's life partner, Ted Schultheis, Calvin Dow's family, and the many friends who have known and loved these folks over the years.

Jack, Calvin, Judy, and Sharon aren't just part of Waterbury's history. They are among the many who have helped to write Waterbury's history. WHS dutifully commits to telling that history, in their memory.



Top: Calvin Dow at 100 during an interview with his local paper in Danbury, CT, the *News-Times*. Photo credit: H John Voorhees III for Hearst Connecticut Media.

Bottom right: Calvin Dow in his Army uniform, 1942. Photo donated by Calvin Dow to the WHS digital archives.

Bottom left: Judy Ather. Photo courtesy of LaVigne Funeral Home.

WHS Returns to Programming With Memorial Day Ceremony and Cemetery Ghost Walk



By Cheryl Casey

After over a year of suspending programs and initiatives, the Waterbury Historical Society returned to business as usual with one of its most popular events, the Memorial Day Observance and Cemetery Ghost Walk. A steady drizzle did little to dampen the spirits of those in attendance, who both solemnly marked the sacrifices of American troops and marveled at the boundary-breaking efforts of the program's featured "ghosts."

On the morning of May 31, a small crowd of about 50 people gathered just inside the entrance of Hope Cemetery on North Main Street for a brief remembrance ceremony helmed by WHS treasurer Paul Willard and members of the American Legion Post 59 Color Guard. Nate Conyers, 8th-grader at Crossett Brook Middle School, read an essay he had written for the occasion. Following Conyers' remarks, Vermont folk singer and historian Linda Radtke performed several songs. The American Legion's Color Guard presented honors, which included a bugle and four-gun salute.



Attendees then moved in small groups, led by WHS volunteers, to three locations across the cemetery to hear presentations about the boundary-breaking Waterbury residents being highlighted that morning. At one stop, WHS member David Luce related the story of Charles Daggs, who became a freedman when Union forces took occupation of the plantation on which he had been raised in Virginia. Among the occupying soldiers was Captain Charles Dillingham, who sent Daggs north to live with his family in Waterbury. Historical accounts indicate that Daggs was bright and did well in school. Daggs died of disease in 1864, only in his early twenties.

Lorenzo Bryant, another freedman sent north by Capt. Dillingham, featured in the presentation by WHS member Skip Flanders. Bryant married Waterbury resident Eliza Thorndike Wood, a Civil War widow, and built the home that still stands at 70 North Main Street. He worked as a janitor at the Methodist Church and wielded his carpentry skills when able.

At the gravestone for Hannah French Merriam and her daughter Rebecca Merriam Forest, WHS president Cheryl Casey summarized the efforts of these women and others who were integral to the state's suffrage movement in the latter half of the 19th century. Casey focused on Elizabeth Colley, who, although buried with family in New Hampshire, spent some 50 years in Waterbury Center, running the Green Mountain Seminary School, advocating for women's right to vote, and running a lodging house.

All of these individuals broke boundaries when the odds were stacked against them. Yet their final resting places are inconspicuous and inauspicious.

SUBMIT CONTENT

We welcome your letters, articles, photos, and creative writing pieces about Waterbury and its history. To submit, email the editor at communitymgr.whs@gmail.com or send by post to:
Dr. Cheryl Casey, 1389 Kneeland Flats Rd., Waterbury Center, VT 05677.

Quarterly submission deadlines: February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15

Donations

David Ayers
General donation, \$25

Joel H. Bassett
In memory of Calvin Dow,
\$200

Jill Ravitzky Black
In memory of Calvin Dow,
\$25

Betsy Shapiro
General donation, \$20

F. Louise Teats
General donation, \$15

John & Val Vincent
General donation, \$50

Gordy & Theresa Wood
Newsletter donation, \$25

The Center Market

As Remembered By Calvin Dow, March 2, 2021

My father, Earl, was born in 1890 in Orange, Vermont. In 1901, my grandfather, Wasson Dow, decided to move the family to Waterbury Center. I've always wondered why they moved to the Center, but it was a genius move--so beautiful, a valley surrounded by three mountains.

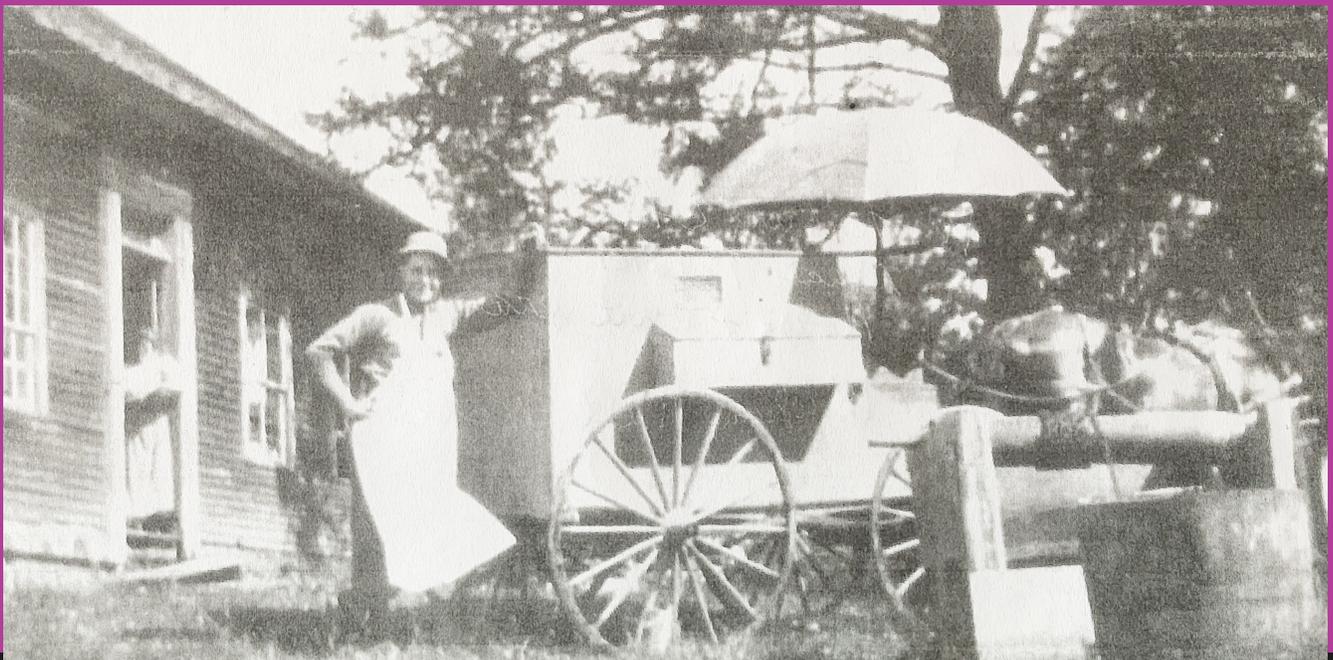
As young men, my father and his brother Leslie noticed that Waterbury Center had no butcher. The two brothers decided to open a market and sell meat products. My father would be the butcher of beef and port, which would be processed at the market. Leslie would run the place up front. This idea possibility originated from a friend who was a butcher in Orange.

The two brothers bought the market [on the west side of the Center triangle] around 1910, when my father was 20 years old.

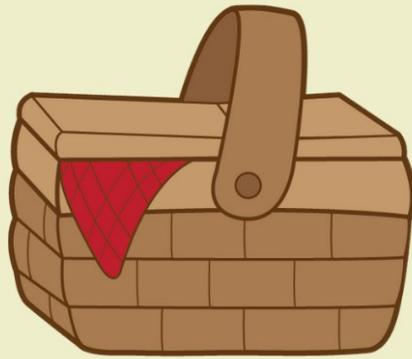
After the meat was processed at the market, my father delivered the products by horse and wagon. Later on, he replaced them with a Dodge pickup truck.

Unfortunately, I have no pictures of the interior of the market, but I can describe what it looked like. There were two beautiful walk-in freezer rooms for hanging the meat. At the back of the market was a small room with a big black metal vat, about three feet in diameter. Under the vat was a wood fire. The cut-up pork went into the vat, and then a press, which hung above, would descend onto the meat and squeeze all the lard out. It exited the vat through a faucet and into a large pail. The lard was then sold for home cooking.

Continued on page 6



**Earl Dow with his meat cart, likely some time in the 1920s.
Photo courtesy of Calvin Dow.**



WATERBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

SUMMER PICNIC & PROGRAM

Wednesday, July 7, 2021 at 1:00pm

Bryan Farm, 901 Maple Street, Waterbury Center

Bring a chair and a dish to share!

Dessert and beverages provided.

This event is free and open to the public.



HISTORY OF THE BRYAN FARM

Memories of the Center Market

Continued from page 4

Another room at the back of the market was a woodshed that stored the wood for the fire under the vat as well as the potbelly stove that heated the market. One more thing was in the woodshed: a large metal funnel attached to a hose, for urinating in the winter!

On the front porch was a Fairbanks scale, to weigh and measure produce (and the six Dow children!). The statistics were recorded on a plaque that hung on the porch wall. Also on the porch was a gas pump for cars and trucks, Gulf Gas for 25 cents per gallon.

On one side of the market was a driveway for Dad's truck to park, and also a metal structure that looked like a phone booth--but was a smoker for the pork. The meat hung on a hook, and the fire underneath it was fueled by dried corn cobs.

The other side of the market had a wooden staircase leading up to an apartment that was occupied by Della Robinson, the postmistress of Watery Center. I regret that I never went up there to investigate the space.

The cellar of the market had a dirt floor and a pile of dirt that served as our root cellar. After the Fall harvest, we would cover our turnips, parsnips, and potatoes with dirt to avoid their freezing during the winter. Those were our vegetables for the season!

[Additional memories:] The Dows and Izors didn't socialize until the 1930s (high school age). Interesting tidbit: Joe Izor's cousin dated my sister Mary at one point! Joe Izor's father owned a bowling alley in Waterbury. I tried bowling, but I didn't want to be inside when I could be outside, skiing or hiking.

My sister Polly, whose middle name was Marion, was named after her Aunt Marion, on my father's side of the family.



Pandemic Perspectives: Waterbury Youth Share Lessons, Experiences From Year of COVID

Editor's Note:

As part of the new book project on Waterbury in the 21st century, the book editors put out a call for students' responses to the following prompt:

How will you describe this time to future generations? What important aspects of this experience should be remembered and shared?

In the remaining newsletter issues of 2021, we will feature some of the wonderful responses submitted for the book.

Brook Greenberg, age 11:

This time has been difficult. However, I feel stronger because I know if something like this happens again my community will have my back. The Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging and hard on people whether it's financial or challenges with mental health. I would not like the future generations to remember 2020 and 2021 and hopefully not 2022 the years of "Oh gosh." I want people to remember it as the years of how our community has grown stronger and closer together. Yes I know that it will be remembered as the Covid-19 pandemic but it is so much more.

When I'm sharing this hard story with younger generations, I want to focus on the positives and not the negatives. If this pandemic didn't happen I wouldn't be the same person I am today. I wouldn't have gotten to find new interests, meet new and amazing people, and become a stronger person in my community. It has been difficult finding new ways to live our lives and go places. But change can be good. Who knows? You may come out of the pandemic being able to bake a pie.

The change that we have gone through is immense and well, life changing. There are all these rules now and more rules are terrible because it's hard enough following the original rules. They're like, make sure you keep a cow between you and stuff like that. But now you can call yourself a coyote because of how well you can adapt. This pandemic has also made us take less for granted. We appreciate the time we get to spend with friends and family more. We appreciate our amazing workers more. We appreciate the meals on the table even more now. This pandemic hasn't been all bad. Plus we started a new fashion trend!

Don Fields and His Pony Boys, WDEV Staples

By Charlotte Strasser

If you listened to WDEV or attended barn dances during the 1930s, 40s, or 50s, you were well acquainted with Don Fields and His Pony Boys. They were one of the most popular and best loved bands of the time.

Born in Montreal in 1913, Don Fields was just an infant when his father moved the family to Waterbury to work on the railroad. Don first picked up a violin at five and began studying at eight. His teacher had hopes of sending him to Europe to pursue a classical career, but the death of Don's father when he was 15 forced him to drop out of school to support the family.

Don worked as an announcer on WDEV and convinced Lloyd Squier to air his first music program "Mountain Music," which featured Don on solo violin. In 1936, he decided to form his own band. The band would need to be small enough to travel easily throughout Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts and Canada, but large enough to play dances and perform on the radio. His "synthetic Western" music--a combination of cowboy music, swing and old -time fiddle music--would prove to be very successful. During one week in the fall of 1940, they performed 12 radio broadcasts and 10 engagements.

Don Fields and His Pony Boys performed five days a week for 15 minutes on WDEV in the 1940s. In addition to performing during the program, they also read fan letters and gave out birthday wishes. Popular songs included "Honeysuckle Rose," "Cripple Creek," and "Tumbling Tumbleweeds." Band members would come and go over the decades. At one time, the band included Sheldon "Buddy" Truax, who would go on to form his own band, The Playboys, comprised of former Pony Boys members Smokey Carey and Zeke Zelonis, along with Barb Izzo (Buddy's sister).



Don Fields and His Pony Boys (left to right): Don Fields, fiddle; Chickie Corelli, banjo; Zeke Zelonis, accordion; Carl Durgin, guitar; and Ray Preavy, stand-up bass. Photo courtesy of Charlotte Strasser.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

The Spring 2021 newsletter contains a historically inaccurate statement in the article on "Anti-Racism in Waterbury." The sentence, on page 3, reads, "In 1860, the Radical Abolitionists and the Democratic Party denounced President Lincoln's weak stance on abolition during his first administration."

Lincoln, a Republican, was elected President in 1860 and it was members of his own party known as the "Radical Republicans" who thought of him as weak on the slavery issue. In 1860, the Democrats were the pro-slavery party and had been for decades previous, and would continue in that role for many decades to come.

Finally, there never was a Radical Abolitionist organization.

David Ayers (York, Maine)

Editor's Note:

Dear David,

The sentence in question paraphrases information provided in *History of Waterbury, Vermont, 1763-1915*, edited by Theodore Graham Lewis. In the newsletter article, the reference is to those taking a hard line—or radical with a small "r"—position about the abolishment of slavery. We assume Lewis is reporting about the very same members of the Republican party as you mention in your letter. Both these Republicans and the Democrats took issue with how Lincoln chose to approach slavery, but obviously for different reasons.

In short, the "radical" in the sentence is meant to function as an adjective, not a title.

Lewis' book is a fascinating read and available on archive.org. Our website includes a link to that file.

Thank you for adding clarification about a very complex political scenario.

Pandemic Perspectives

Vince Wing, age 11:

Dear future people,

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the scariest times. 2.82 million people worldwide have died and probably more to come. I was at my house when I got a call, "ring ring. We were in lockdown for 3 weeks." After those three weeks, we got a call saying we would not be in school for the rest of the year. This was devastating. We had to wear masks everywhere and the grocery store was running low on toilet paper. Everyone was stocking up on food and drinks so that we only had to go to the store occasionally. It was not even on our mind a year before that we were gonna have to lock down. It was such a surprise. It was inevitable that we were going to have to be like this for a long time until everything goes back to normal.

It has been 1 year since lockdown started and everything is moving along. There is even a vaccine. There is testing on 6-month-olds to 12-year-olds right now, and 18 and older are getting vaccines and it is going very smoothly.

Make sure you always wash your hands and stay safe so another pandemic does not happen again. It is not fun. Take it from me, even though Covid did not make me lose a loved one, Covid is still probably gonna be one of the scariest times I will live in.

Another thing that was a bummer is we had to watch kids graduate for 4 years meaning since kindergarten to 3rd grade we had to go to other students' graduation. Waiting for our turn and then it got canceled and this was so annoying. I did get to go to the school and drive through a line and get a book that we wanted just like kids that had an actual graduation.

Hopefully you learned how to prepare for a pandemic.

Olivia Ambler:

At first I thought Covid would be hard and challenging. I remember the first day we were in lockdown, my friends and I joking and talking, "We would have a three week break and then summer!" We would plan our days out and Facetime as much as we could. As Covid got worse, I was afraid what would happen next. I looked on to summer and learned I couldn't go to my sleepaway camp, I couldn't go to Canada to visit my family, and I couldn't have the summer that I really wanted. As school came close to an end, I started to really like remote learning. I found that I could do my work in the morning and have fun and do my own thing in the afternoon.

When summer came around we slept at our cottage. It was not the same as previous years but it was still fun. No fun parties or sleepovers but swimming, walking, boating, tennis and ice cream was still an option. Looking back on the summer, it was fun, yet different. The change was a challenge but I liked it. My family and I had to work around not going to Canada to see our entire family, but we found other things to do like get a puppy! He really filled up our time.

As the school year slipped into my schedule, I found it was my type of thing. I love the way I can just relax on the couch or sit outside and work at my own pace. Going for walks with friends or skiing was something I could look forward to everyday. Skiing became a big time-consumer; it was really fun just going to the mountain with friends and just skiing and goofing around.

As the winter came to an end, I tried to figure out what to do since I couldn't ski in the spring. So, I started going on walks and making jewelry. I found a passion for jewelry making in the late winter. I started a jewelry business called "Palette by liv," and I sold handmade beaded jewelry on Etsy. I got many sales, followers on Instagram, and made friends with other young business owners. As you can see, my life of Covid became my daily life that I loved and enjoyed.

Handmade seed beaded jewelry



and more

Waterbury youth Olivia Ambler started learning how to be a small business owner during COVID, making and selling her own jewelry designs in her Etsy shop, Palette by liv.



Wheeler Farm barn, 1934. Photo courtesy of Grace and Jack Sweet.

History of the Wheeler Farm Barn

By Grace Sweet

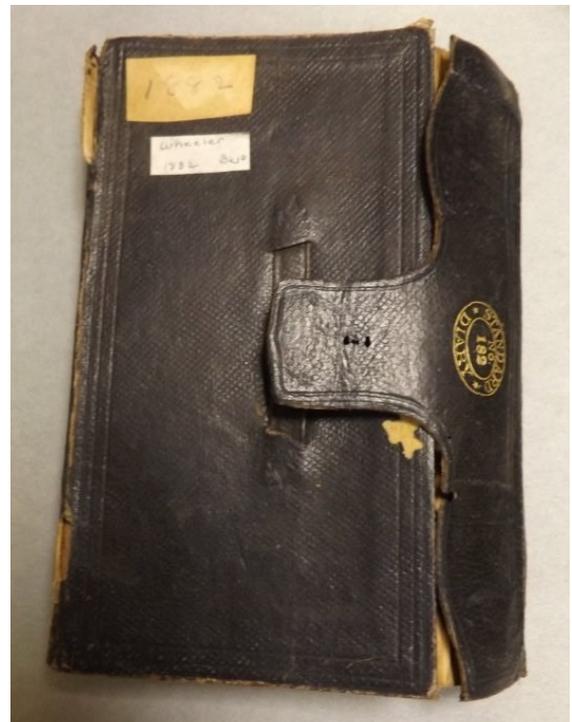
The picture is the barn on the Wheeler Farm on Loomis Hill about 1934. It is believed to have been built by the Wheeler family in the early 1800s. Timothy Wheeler lived on the farm in 1858, according to information from the Walling's Atlas of 1858. Joseph Wheeler lived on the farm in 1873, according to the Beers Atlas of 1873. Joseph and Timothy Wheeler were brothers. Joseph Wheeler was the father of Stedman Wheeler, who was the father of Amy Wheeler Ayers, mother of Gleason Wheeler Ayers. The Wheeler Farm was one of at least seven farms on that road in the mid 1800s. The Wheeler Farm has been owned by the Jack Sweet Family since 1954.

The picture was taken about 1934 by Elizabeth Graves Woodmansee. The Leslie Graves Family lived on the farm in 1934 and the picture was provided by Robert Graves, son of Leslie Graves.

The children pictured on the road (Waterworks Road, or now Sweet Road) are Irene Graves (Davis) on the right and Robert Graves on the left. The people on the roof of the barn are Herb Graves, Leslie Graves and Erwin Hayes.

The barn is getting a new roof, which appears to be a metal roof probably to replace a cedar shake roof.

The barn was completely destroyed in the 1938 hurricane. Jim Thurston and family lived on the farm at the time of the hurricane. The barn was rebuilt on the other side of the road in 1939 by Joe Metayer.



Joseph Wheeler's 1882 diary. Joseph was a prolific writer, and WHS holds his diaries and other writings from 1859-1904. (WHS Digital Archives)

Featured Figure: Horace Fales (1823-1882)

Waterbury Doctor and Dentist

Information compiled by Margo Sayah from *Gazetteer of Washington County, VT, 1783-1889* (Hamilton Child and William Adams, Editors)

Horace Fales was born in Sharon, Vermont in 1823 and lived there and in adjoining towns until 1843. He graduated from Kimball Union Academy, in Meriden, New Hampshire with an academic degree preparing him for the medical profession. In 1845 he worked and studied with his uncle, a doctor in Brattleboro, and in 1848 graduated from the Vermont Medical College, Woodstock, Vermont. In June of that year, he moved to Waterbury where he was both doctor and dentist for the townspeople of Waterbury and surrounding towns. He was well known as an insightful medical professional who “inspired courage in the invalid”. He was “public spirited and ever ready to aid every enterprise for the advancement of the society of his town”. He served as Selectman for several terms. He

had a magnificent farm on land where the State office complex is now located, where he raised horses and cattle in his spare time.

When Dr. Fales’ widow, Henrietta (Sheple) Fales died in 1906, she made a provision in her will for a trust fund of \$15,000 (The Horace Fales Fund) “for aiding in the maintenance of a public library in the village of Waterbury in loving memory of my deceased husband who had a home there during the major portion of his business life and whose intimate social and professional relations with its people produced an interest in and affection for the place which it is my wish to commemorate”. The interest from that money was used to purchase books and periodicals for the library.

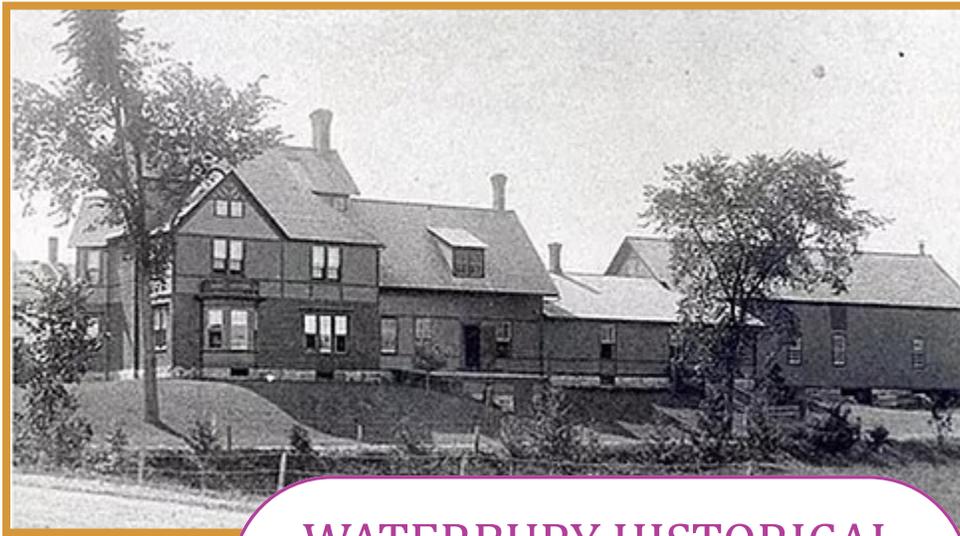


Left: Dr. Horace Fales (Waterbury Historical Society Digital Archives)

Top: The 6” x 10” tin sign advertising Dr. Fales’ practice (WHS Digital Archives)

Top right: The former Fales house, which became the Vermont State Hospital Annex Building when it and its 45 acres were acquired by the asylum’s trustees in 1895, for a purchase price of \$7,000. (Photo courtesy of *Waterbury Office Complex Architectural History Report, 2012*)

Bottom right: The former Fales house/Hospital Annex in present day. (Photo courtesy of Google Street View)



WATERBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORY CENTER

The History Center is open **Monday—Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Located on the second floor of the Municipal Building in the newly renovated Dr. Janes house, the museum is free and open to the public. The Historical Society's vast collections rotate through the exhibits, which are carefully assembled by our Curator. Stop by and learn something new about Waterbury's place in Vermont and national history!

UPDATE: The History Center is expected to reopen mid-July. Please check our website or Facebook for additional information.

History Center donations are

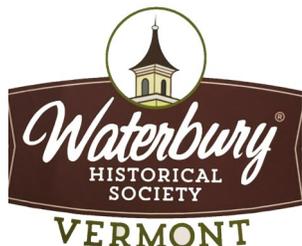
**TEMPORARILY
SUSPENDED**

We regret the inconvenience
and hope to start accepting
items again soon.

We are unable to accept donations at this time. The pandemic shutdown significantly slowed our work in sorting, cataloging and digitizing the many artifacts, photographs, and papers that Waterbury residents and businesses have graciously asked us to preserve. WHS faces an additional challenge with the sudden loss of our beloved and talented Curator, Jack Carter.

The Historical Society respectfully asks for your patience, and that you hold on to your items until we are better positioned to give them the care and attention that they deserve.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support of Waterbury Historical Society.



Donations Welcome - We are a community organization that deeply appreciates the support and interest of our community. You can donate by check to the PO Box below.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$10 per person

\$15 per family (couple and children under 18)

(Membership expirations can be found on your mailing label or in your winter email delivery.)

Please help the Historical Society GO GREEN!

Contact us to opt for email-only delivery. Benefits include cost-saving, paper-saving, and a newsletter in color!



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE