

# Waterbury Historical Society

Winter 2016  
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Waterbury, Vermont 05676

## From Jasper's Diary, Part 3

by his great, great nephew Bob Ayers



Jasper Ayers and his brother and other family members are buried at the Old Cemetery in Waterbury Center in the back row near the fence to the left of center.

"Winter was always coming on Ricker Mountain."

This is how I ended my previous article more than a year ago with a promise of a third and final article chronicling the last few years of Jasper Ayers' life as indicated in the fourth volume of his diaries. Jasper was my great, great

grandfather Jerry Ayers' younger brother who lived in the Ricker Mountain, Waterbury Center and Stowe area from 1811 until his death on November 2, 1891.

As I sat and read many of his brief entries, I realized that winter took an already hard life into several months of additional hardships. We can appreciate this since most of us live through a Vermont winter year after year. We, too, worry about the road conditions and our health and, perhaps, late springs. Here is what concerned Jasper in March 1879, when he was 67 years old:

*March 1 Wife & I both shut up tite  
March 8 Doct here to day, we are no better yet*

*March 10 I a little better + out of dores, first time in 18 days this month has been rather Severe with but little fair weather + snow aplenty, this month talley's out 99 days unbroken sleighing + without but very little thaws*

*April 7 Fred boiled sap for 35th Shugar, the first time this yr no shugaring to any amount yet*

Later that April Jasper made this comment:

*...we have had 112 day of unbroken sleighing the past winter*

Yet, like our weather today, some winters are less harsh; this entry is from January of 1882: *Stage on runners the 12th first sleighing this winter*

(He is referring here to the stage coach

being able to transport people using wheels until nearly mid-January when the road becomes impassable due to snow. Then the coach must use runners to make it to the next town.)

Then, apparently, the next winter was long and snowy. This is Jasper's entry from the next April in 1883:

*11th all hands out opening roads for wagons  
We dug a chanel through the snow front of our hous + found the travel of the road was full six feet above the ground*

Incredibly, by mid-April of that year, there was still six feet of packed snow on the road and wagons followed wheel channels to get into town. One can only imagine the muddy condition of that same road after two or three weeks of warm, sunny April or May days!

All those neighbors out there opening the roads must have been thirsty at the finish of the job. Perhaps corn beer kept cold all winter would hit the spot. Here is Jasper's 1877 recipe for it.

*A receipt to make 1 bbl corn Beer  
Take six or 8 quarts corn Boil until soft  
" one pound Hops steeped & strain  
" 2 gallons Molases or its equal in shugar  
" 1 quart yiest, & ginger to taste  
fill the barrel with water Blood warm*

And there it ends. We can assume that anyone reading this list of ingredients in 1877 would know what to do next.

One more autumn recipe from September, 1877:

*To Keep sider sweet grate up Horseradish one pint to A. Barrell Put it in when sider is worked anoughf*

As Jasper gets into his 70s, his entries indicate much less physical work like building

barns and sawing wood. Rather, he seems to be travelling a lot, apparently visiting his seven living children as well as friends. He spent several months in North Dakota visiting his son Adamiran. In 1887 he went from Waterbury to Williamsburg (probably Williamstown), Massachusetts to Albany then to Geneva, New York.

*waited at Cyracuse fir 2 1/2 hours + got there to Supper (Fair & warm) up to 90 look about town AM See Barnum Street Show miss the noon train got in to Malone...at midnite*

Several entries indicate that at this time he lived in Stowe with his daughter Aurora or his son William or in Waterbury Center with his son George. He often went to Stowe to church. This diary entry was written in 1887:

*Saturday Sept 10 Back to center  
I took stage for home and gat home 10-30 AM  
(After pying Stage Fair home .25  
I had just six dollars & 45 cts in my Purs)  
(Some clowdy & cool*

The final entry in the fourth volume of his diaries was written when Jasper was 77 years of age:

*1888 March 2 of F W Bery 5 ''*

Whether he was borrowing or lending five dollars to FW Bery (Berry or Barry?) is uncertain. Five dollars in 1888 is the equivalent of \$122 now.

Jasper Ayers died in Stowe on December 2, 1891 at the age of 80. The circumstances of his death are unknown; the cause was probably as simple as "old age." He is buried in the Old Waterbury Center Cemetery with a several of his brothers including my great, great grandfather Jerry.

I lift a glass of cold corn beer to them all.  
Rest in peace!

## Waterbury Center Grange #237 Painted Curtain

By Jack Carter



The Waterbury Center Grange Painted Curtain

The program committee will present, at the January 27th meeting, stories of the 24 businesses that advertised on the painted curtain. The curtain was recently donated to the Historical Society by the Waterbury Center Grange #237.

The Waterbury Center Grange was established in the 1895. In 1929 it purchased the Baptist Church on the Center Common and it was their home for 86 years. In 2015 they decided to dissolve the organization with only a handful of active remaining members.

The remaining members decided to donate a painted curtain that had been part of the building for 80 years to the Waterbury Historical Society (WHS). The curtain was painted in the 1930s and is typical of many such curtains that graced Granges, opera houses and other community buildings throughout the United States and beyond. The Grange curtain is in wonderful condition and restored about ten years ago. It was financed at the time by selling advertisements from local businesses. We are very fortunate to have such a remarkable artifact from that time in our history.

Because of its size – 25.6'W x 8'H there are very few places in Waterbury to hang the curtain. WHS proposed moving the curtain to Thatcher Brook Primary School (TBPS) stage gymnasium. Theresa and Jack met with the school board and administrators and they approved the move. Members of WHS also met with Christine Hadsel, a conservator of painted curtains and Robert Brier, a professional rigger,

who is experienced in installing these curtains. Both agreed that it can be moved safely to the school.

The move to TBPS seems like a natural place since that part of the building complex (Waterbury High School) was built in 1933 about the same time as the curtain was painted. It is a wonderful public space and the curtain could be displayed at special events; Town Meeting, plays and other public events. The curtain will be rolled up and safely secured and locked out of the way of the public most of the time.

On December 19th a crew consisting of Christine Hadsel, Theresa Wood, Jan Gendreau, David and Margaret Luce, Dave Luce, Chad Ummel, David Mason, Anne and Dick White, Peter Holm and Jack Carter helped take the curtain down from the stage of the Grange. It will be stored until the end of February when it will be installed at the school in time for a Town Meeting unveiling.

## New Members

David Ayers, Maine  
Jeremy Ayers, Waterbury  
Richard Ayers, New Hampshire  
Diana French, Morrisville  
Sandra Hough, Waterbury  
Stanley Richardson, Bolton  
Betsy Shapiro, Waterbury  
Christine Tucker, Texas

## Donations

**Bob Bailey:** Two different Green Mountain coffee mugs.

**Betty Bordeaux:** Packet of photocopied pictures and postcards.

**David Cutter:** Newsletter Donation.

**Helen Davis:** Washington County Farm Bureau DVD featuring Helen Davis and Keith Wallace;

flyer for the program and copy of a newspaper article for the program.

**Calvin Dow:** Cash Donation.

**Douglas & Elizabeth Finley:** Newsletter Donation.

**Larry Fraiser:** Steeple Construction Lighter – “30 years of Service”; eight Waterbury Records; “When the Water Came to Waterbury” 1st edition; small Chickie Williams saucer/ashtray; Florence Colbeth’s American Legion Post 59 lighter; matchbook covers from Hideout Restaurant, Montpelier Tavern, Morse’s Taxi & The Smith Store; 1997 button for Hanaford’s Volunteers’ Muster in Waterbury; 2 Moody Cream tops; 1963 Bicentennial wooden nickel; Brochure “Waterbury Among the Friendly Green Mountains of Vermont”; 1965 Burlington Free Press collection calendar; 3 reprints of photographs Waterbury scenes; 4 reprints of different 1927 Flood photographs; Vermont map by Z. Thompson; 8 x 10 reprint of Don Fields & the Pony Boys at WDEV; 8 x 10 reprint of Little River Bridge that collapsed; 8 x 10 reprint of Bank Hill; August 1947 Driftwind, A Magazine of Verse.

**Helen Hickory:** “When the Water Came to Waterbury” 1st edition; issues of the original Waterbury Record.

**Doreen Horton:** “Will You Come to Waterbury” postcard.

**Sandra Hough:** Green Mountain Chocolate Company apron; two photos from Methodist Church Sunday School program 1978; 9 DVDs: August 29, 2013 demolition of VSH Osgood Building; Old Vermont State Hospital Postcards; VSH after Irene; Demolition of VSH #1; Demolition of VSH #2; Admission Building Demolition; Complex Construction; “Ken Squier – His Life...so far”; Construction of Noyes building on North Main Street (2); 2015 River of Light Parade; 2012 Harwood Graduation.

**Wesley Kaiser:** 1975 Waterbury Police Department Trick or Treat Fun coloring book; Bible presented to Sunday School student 1961 signed by Doris Flanders, Wesley Logan, Gladys Wrisle; 1969 Harwood Union High School Tartan; Cub Scout Uniform Pack 711, 1984; 1993 “Our Town” Program & ticket for HUHS; 1986, 1987 & 1988 Waterbury Elementary Winter Concert Programs; 1987, 1988 & 1989 Waterbury Elementary Spring Concert Programs; Program from “Wizard of Oz” play; 1993, 1994 & 1995 HUHS Awards Assembly program; 1986 & 1987 Waterbury Cub Scout Pinewood Derby program; 1986 & 1987 Waterbury Cub Scout Blue & Gold Banquet; 1986 Waterbury Cub Scout Pack 711 membership card and Den Leader Membership card; 1986-7 Pack 711 Cub Scout hat, beads & badges, shirt, neckerchief and tie slide; HUHS June 12, 1995 “The Kilt”; HUHS 1994 “David & Lisa” play program; HUHS 1993 “Peter Pan” Program and Pin.

**Don & Gail McCain, Stowe:** 1950s red taffeta dress with crinolines; two 5 x 7 of the May Farm on Route 100 North, 1899 & 1900; two framed photos of Mansfield farm with family on Gregg Hill.

**Ed & Karen Steele:** Cash donation for newsletter postage; 1946 Longhorn; 1947 Longhorn; two 1948 Longhorns; December 1, 1944 Longhorn newspaper; 8 x 10 photographs of the following: 1945-1946 girls basketball team; 1947-1948 girls basketball team; 1948-1949 girls basketball team; 1944-1945 boys basketball team; 1945-1946 boys basketball team; 1946-1947 boys basketball team; 1947-1948 boys basketball team; 1948-1949 boys basketball team; 1950-1951 boys basketball team; 1951 State Champions Cross Country team and a postcard of the 1917-1918 boys basketball team; and all the team members are named except for the 1917-1918.

**Gordy and Theresa Wood:** Curtain Donation and Newsletter Donation.

## In Memory



**Robert A. Pecor**

April 2, 1933 - December 19, 2015

Robert Arnold Pecor passed away at the Birchwood Terrace Nursing Center in Burlington on December 19, 2015. Born in Burlington on April 2, 1933, he was the son of the late Adelbert and Lena (May) Pecor. He married Joan Lawrence on January 19, 1957 in Waterbury.

Bob attended schools in Waterbury, Bolton and Richmond and then joined the Army. Bob worked for the Plant and Griffith Lumber Co. and Gallagher Lumber Co. before working as a carpenter for the Noyes and Noyes Construction Co., from which he retired due to declining health. Bob was also a member of the Vermont Army National Guard in Waterbury. His memberships included the Harry N. Cutting American Legion Post 59 in Waterbury. He loved fishing, hunting, playing cards and horseshoes.

Bob is survived by his wife of nearly 59 years, Joan Pecor of Bolton; their daughter, Robin Pecor-Brunell and her husband Chris of Bolton; 5 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren, his sister, Barbara Pritchard of Randolph; a step-sister, Sandra Steady of Bristol; a step-brother, Richard Gorton of Starksboro; as well as nieces, nephews and extended family. Bob was predeceased by his sisters, Faith DeForge and Shirley Mullen; a half-brother, Roger Morrow; and step-siblings, Audrey Lavigne, Doris Normandy, Roger Gorton, Robert Gorton and Ronnie Gorton.

Graveside services with military honors will be held this spring from Waterbury Center Cemetery at a date and time to be announced.

## Letters to the Editor

October 2015

Wesley,

Catherine Adams Church and my brother Sam were both residing in a beautifully located Nursing Home in Williston, Vermont. The Vermont Reform School was located where? Excellent researched article by Linda revealing the life of wounded Civil War Veteran Joseph Holmes.

Your Connecticut Member,  
Calvin Dow

(Editor's Note: See page 14 for Reform School location.)

October 18, 2015

Wesley Kaiser,

I have enclosed a few photos that I thought might be of interest to the newsletter readers. One is simply because I wonder if anyone can give me any information as to why local men were in Cuba in 1906.

I wonder if anyone else has information or photos of the activation of the National Guard Troops in 1950. I had just graduated from high school at that time and was engaged to Robert Bordeaux, who was in A Battery. I have a large packet of letters he sent me during the nearly two years they were gone. The Waterbury Community put on a wonderful dance in the high school gym to honor the boys. What a fun night that was ... the townspeople turned out in large numbers for this "Salute to the Guard" dance featuring round and square dancing. I've forgotten who provided the music.

A story was featured in Redbook magazine. I gave my copy of the magazine to my son, Douglas Bordeaux, but I kept a copy of the story.

Bob was a cook during those years, and the holiday meals were a lot of work. He later

became a medic, and liked that a great deal more, retiring from the medical battalion in 1991.

Elizabeth (Betty) Bordeaux  
1255 Lynx Bend  
San Antonio, TX 78251

[lizzieb1932@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lizzieb1932@sbcglobal.net)

November 2015

Hi Wesley & Linda,

I received a professionally wrapped package from my favorite Waterbury Historical Society women bakers. Perfect tasty pastry for the Holiday Season.

Much appreciated from Your Connecticut Member,  
Calvin Dow

(Editor's Note: Calvin made a wonderful donation to the Waterbury Historical Society and requested his favorite oatmeal bread recipe and cranberry scones. Linda Kaiser and Nancy Champney baked the treats for him. Thanks for the donation, Calvin.)

## **Vermont Watchman & State Journal March 22, 1882**

Washington County Court

William Cooley vs. William Barnes was the second case tried. Both parties are residents of Waterbury Center. The plaintiff is the inventor of the Cooley milk-pan, and in 1878 and 1879 called on a butter and skimmed-milk cheese factory at Waterbury Center. The defendant furnished him with milk. The plaintiff testified that in about the middle of the summer of 1879 he suspected that the defendant watered the milk before delivering it to him. He made tests with the lactometer and became sure that it was so.

But to make an absolute certainty of the matter, on three different occasions, each time with a different neighbor, he went to the defendant's premises, hid in a loft over the shed where the bulk cans were set, and there he and his witnesses saw the defendant pour water into the cans after the milk had been poured in. The neighbors in question corroborated the plaintiff. The defendant denied the charge, and said that he poured the water, not into the cans, but into the barrels in which the cans set, in order to cool the milk. The defendant is a well appearing man, who is in good standing with townspeople, and it is astonishing that he should be guilty of such a petty fraud. Mr. Dillingham endeavored to explain the testimony of the eye-witnesses away by arguing that they were mesmerized by Cooley, who told them that they would see the defendant pour water into the cans, and so impressed their minds that when he really poured the water into the barrels which surrounded the cans, they believed he poured it into the cans. If Cooley had Mr. Dillingham's own powers of mesmerizing his auditors by the spell of his eloquence, the theory would be a good one, but it did not appear that he had. The action is brought under the provisions of an act passed in 1870, which says that any one selling to a butter or cream manufactory adulterated milk, shall forfeit for each offence not less than \$25 or more than \$100, for the benefit of the person upon which the fraud is committed. The jury found the defendant guilty of four offences, and brought in a verdict in favor of the plaintiff of \$258 and costs, or \$62 for last offence. So it appears that selling watered milk is six times as costly an offence as selling watered rum, the penalty for which is \$10 for each offence. The case will go to the Supreme Court upon exceptions to the manner in which the declaration was drawn. E.F. Palmer and Charles H. Heath for the plaintiff; Messrs. William P. Dillingham and C.F. Clough for the defendant.

(William Cooley is the great-great grandfather of Historical Society members Carol Perry and Sandra Hough.)

## CCC Camp Charles M. Smith Trail System

By Anne Imhoff



Dave Morse, Caroline Fox, Park Ranger Jessie, and Herschell Murry

On Saturday, October 24th, a lovely fall day, Natalie Sherman, Jan Gendreau, Herschell Murry, Gordon Miller, Dave Morse, Caroline Fox, Elise Werth, Little River State park rangers Jessie and Shanell and I gathered on “Natalie’s pad” for a picnic to celebrate the (almost) completion of the Camp Smith trails. Natalie thoughtfully brought appetizers to share, and read a short toast to me for driving the volunteers clearing the trails over the years. Thank you Natalie!

There remain a few minor finishing projects for next spring: complete clearing the barrack site #7, and the short path by mess #50. I will try to organize that next spring, along with a general spring-clean up of the winter debris.

In the very beginning, back in 2007, Bob Finucane provided me a copy of the 1937 Vermont Public Works map of Camp Smith. Map in hand, Brian Lindner led me through the camp for the first time and has continued to provide insights and information about the CCC boys.

I am very deeply appreciative to the many individuals, who beginning in 2011 were willing to give up two hours of a summer Saturday morning to help create a trail through the remains of the old CCC camp. Over the years, the

following individuals devoted their labor and enthusiasm to the project:

Gordon Miller, my first volunteer and who discovered the ‘circle of stones’ near the second chimney; Herschell Murry faithfully mowed the grass on the trails as well as chopped out many tree stumps; Natalie Sherman, a Wonder Woman when pulling up saplings; Chuck Kletecka and Dave Morse who cut down small trees and brush; Jan Gendreau, Carolyn Fox and Cammie Mason who shoveled and pulled weeds; 13 individuals from Rebuild Waterbury who cleared mess #50 and removed over a dozen tires from the ravine; Dave Luce, Margaret Luce, Louisa Nufield, Willie White, Emma Howell, Joan Devine, Erwin Devine, Gordie Wood, Theresa Wood, Robert Dostis, Chad Ummel, Cheryl Casey, Karen & J. Miller, Elise Werth, and Fred Abraham, all of whom worked on various parts of the trail.



Herschell Murry and Gordon Miller

My grateful thanks also extend to Susan Bulmer, Northeast Parks Regional Manager, Vermont State Parks, Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation for giving me permission to clear the old camp roads. Susan encouraged and supported the concept from the beginning, and assigned Barb MacGregor to work with me. Barb organized the removal of many large trees and

recently erected temporary informational signs along the trail.

Going forward, a new parking area is being constructed this fall to accommodate at least two school buses and six cars, across the road from the Monument parking area. During the winter I'll search for grants to stabilize the three chimneys. Any and all contributions from individuals and organizations for this work may be made to the Waterbury Historical Society, a 501c3 organization, memo to the CCC Chimney fund. And finally, I'll need someone to take over from me for the yearly maintenance of the trails until such time as Susan is able to obtain the funding for the universally accessible trails.



Herschell Murry and Park Ranger Shanell

Thank all of you for your continued enthusiasm, interest, work, and support of CCC Camp Charles M. Smith trail system. Couldn't have accomplished so much without you.

## A Vermonter Retires

By Calvin Dow



Johnny Cowan 1991 Nice, France

Johnny Cowan emigrated from Nice, France and still retained a cultivated Riviera accent. I had the pleasure of winter Vermont skiigaud, summer playing beautiful clay court tennis with him for years. Retiring at age 60, I had plenty of time for the good life. "Joie de vivre." He had a Har-Tru clay court next to his swimming pool. Play a set of tennis, jump into the pool, then sit in the shade of a sugar maple tree, quaffing a cool beer and discussing our trip to Chamonix in the French Alps. He spoke the language and I studied French for two years in good olde Waterbury High with a trip to Montreal where the native all "parlay vous"ed.

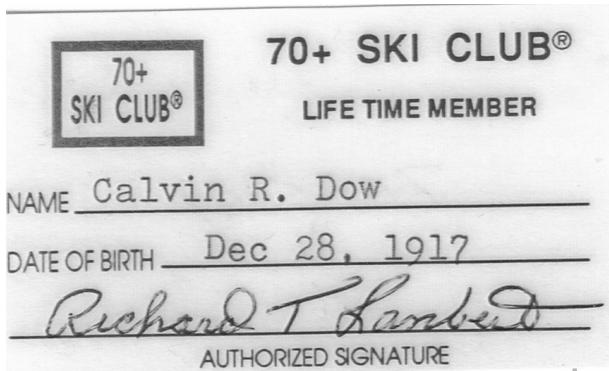
Chamonix was a famous ski resort but in the summer time we would be playing in a week long tennis tournament for seniors on the beautiful red European clay. One side trip would be to Paris where we would barrel down the wide, tree lined Champs Elysees. At the Eiffel Tower we would elevate up to the restaurant with a sweeping, panoramic view of the Seine and the hills of Montmartre where we planned to savor the artists' colony and perhaps meet Giacomo Puccini and some of the world famous Bohemians.

The boulevard Champs E. flows into the Bois de Boulogne, a spectacular 2000 acre Park where we would enjoy the close encounter with the historic French Open Tennis Tournament at Rolland Garras Stadium.

Johnny had been visited by some of the so-called tennis elbow and some embryonic arthritics. He had it from unimpeachable sources

that a health spa in Padua – norther Italy boasted mud bath treatments that promised six months of pain free tennis. That would be our last stop on this European visit.

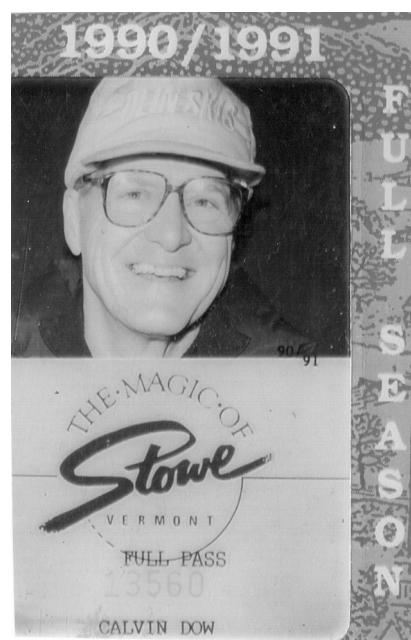
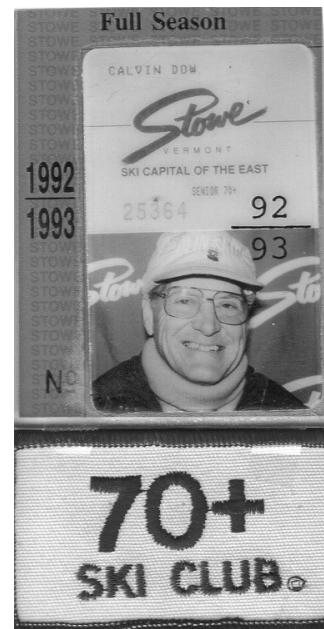
At Killington Mountain in Vermont he owned a charming French style chalet where we lived during the winter visits to ski the five peaks serviced by five chair lifts that connected so that you could ski all five peaks without taking off your skis. From the top you had that breathtaking view of the Vermont that we dearly loved.



The next topic we discussed was joining the "70+" Ski Club of 5000 members who could ski free on mountains around the world. I had three birth certificates and one showed I was born in 1915 , allowing me to join at age 65. Is there a little larceny in every human? A brochure from the Club showed members skiing in the Swiss Alps and the glaciers of New Zealand. We immediately started plans to ski Mt. Cook in New Zealand: 12,000 feet high, created by a volcano and had no ski lifts. A helicopter would take us to the summit; we would ski down thru beautiful powder snow until we reached the glacier ice. There the copter would fly us back to the top. The flight return to the US stopped in Hawaii for a few days. A bungee jump into a deep canyon, carved by a roaring river was available for viewing or participating.

That winter I skied the mountains of Vermont starting at Stowe-Mansfield and on to Okemo, Pico, Bolton, Jay Peak near Canada, etc. courtesy of the 70+Club. They would take my

photo, seal it in a plastic card that read Super Senior skis free for the entire winter season! They talk about the Golden Years of retirement. This is it! Retiring at age 60 I have now reached 95. They say the future belongs to those who prepare for it. The Creator gave me this magnificent brain and body. I have beaucoup crusades and projects to keep them rolling from the past and the present and on into the future as a centenarian.



Calvin Dow's Ski Club Cards

**Waterbury High School Boys' Basketball  
1945-1946**



Waterbury High School Boys' Basketball  
1945-1946

Front: Bud Deal, Bernard "Bing" Woodard  
Middle: Dick Izor, Willard Breen, Bob Luce, Dick Russell, Bob Talbert, Moses Farmer  
Back: Coach Stone, Bill O'Brien, Verny Donovan, Wayne Cutting, Bernard Keefe

Photo donated by Ed and Karen Steele.

**Waterbury High School Girls' Basketball  
1945-1946**



**Waterbury High School Girls' Basketball  
1945-1946**

Front: Arlene West, Emily Collins, Sally Randall, Eleanor Gage, Merry Rowe, Patricia Morrell  
Back: Martha Collins, Manager; Jean Guptil, Bill Randall, Coach; Mary Jan Talbert, Arlyne Falardeau

Photo donated by Ed and Karen Steele.



## Center School About 1960

This was Mrs Lambert's 2nd & 3rd grade class.

### Front Row

1. Patsy Guyette
2. George Woodard
3. Gale Towne
4. Larry Wells ???
5. Gary Thurston
6. Joe Metayer
7. Paul Baker

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Row

8. Joyce Ayers
9. Howard Deal
10. Vincent Metayer
- 11.
12. Lisa Guthridge
- 13.
14. Jimmy Weaver
15. Amy Orton
16. Pam Parker
17. Cheryl Dolloff

### Back Row

18. Donna Irish
19. Randy Clark
20. Joyce Sweetser
21. Gail Dolloff
22. Douglas Lay
23. Mrs. Barbara Lambert
- 24.
25. Carolee Percy
26. Grace Salmon ???
27. Sherry Woodard

Thanks to George Woodard & Brian Lindner for help in identifying the class members.

## Margaret Annette Henry Spencer

By Jack Carter

The following is a presentation given during Waterbury Recreation Department's "Wicked Waterbury Ghost Walk" in late October, 2015.

### At the Spencer Mausoleum Hope Cemetery

The story of the woman whose remains reside in this imposing granite mausoleum is one of fact and fiction driven perhaps by gossip or envy or truth.

Margaret Annette Spencer, who was known as "Nettie", was born in Waterbury in 1848 on the family farm that was located near the former flea market site on Route 2. She was one of eight children of Sylvester and Laura (Blush) Henry. Later her father purchased a large parcel of land on North Main Street that included what is now the Old Stagecoach Inn. She inherited the property and it became her home.

Not much is known of her early life. It is known that she attended school in Montreal and in 1903 married speculator and art dealer Albert Spencer in London. She was 55 years old. Their marriage was short lived. He died three years later. After his death rumors spread that she had poisoned him after learning that he had a mistress. In his will he left half of his estate to Nettie and the other half to his mistress. Nettie was not happy about this settlement. But with her new found wealth she had a winter apartment in the Waldorf Astoria in New York City and homes in Newport R.I. and Paris as well as her home at 18 North Main Street.

The widow Spencer lived a very unconventional and secretive life. Townsfolk kept their distance from her and she had little to do with them. Her odd habits, such as smoking copious amount of cigarettes and chewing tobacco, plus her alleged bootlegging of alcohol during Prohibition led her to become Waterbury's most notorious citizen. The fact that she was

"deaf as a post" only led to more intrigue.

She mentioned many times that when she died she did not want to be buried in the ground so she had this mausoleum built for herself with a sarcophagus inside. Her cremains were placed within. She had her brothers' and sisters' names inscribed on the side of the mausoleum but only her remains are within.

In the end, she was a farmer's daughter who lived a fabulous life and was reputed to be the richest woman in Vermont at the time of her death at the age of 99 in 1947.

### At the Old Stagecoach Inn

The eccentric widow Spencer spent her remaining days here and at her other residences finally passing away in Brookline, Massachusetts. While here she spent most of her time in her bedroom smoking cigarettes and not venturing out much. Her appearance, when seen, was that of a woman wearing black clothing, a dark celluloid eyeshade and her hair pulled back in a bun. Of course, this seclusion only led to more mystery about her.

Since her death, stories about "Nettie" haunting the Old Stagecoach Inn have been in several forms but never anything sinister, always more playful than terrifying. A rocking chair reported suddenly begins to rock in an agitated manner and continues for several minutes with no one near it; furniture items are moved; beds have their linens stripped and neatly folded.

The most interesting story is told by Jack Barwick, the current innkeeper:

It was a busy summer weekend at Sunday morning breakfast. The dining room was still mostly full. All the rooms were booked but the reservation for room three had been unexpectedly cancelled the previous evening. Mr. Barwick had taken the cancellation himself and no one else but he knew it.

As he was standing at the dining room entrance two people came down for breakfast. They were unfamiliar to him. He had registered all the other guests and chatted with many of them, so he had a pretty good idea who was

staying at the Inn. He thought it was a couple who had come in from off the street looking for breakfast, which occasionally happens. But it was odd that they had come down the stairs instead of through the side door.

To make sure, he asked if they were guests of the Inn.

"Yes", they replied. "We are in room three"

"How many of you are there?", Mr. Barwick asked.

"Three" they answered.

"Three," said Mr. Barwick. "That room accommodates only two. Where did you all sleep?"

"Oh, we managed," they replied. "We couldn't find a place to stay. This was the only one."

Still puzzled, Mr. Barwick asked, "Well, what time did you come in?"

"Oh," they said. "It was around two-thirty this morning."

"Well, who let you in?" asked Mr. Barwick. "Why, it was a lady, an older lady. Very nice."

More puzzled than ever, he now asked, "What did she look like?" thinking it might have been one of the other guests who had been awake at that hour.

"Gray hair, kind of in a bun and wearing a long dark dress," they replied.

Thank you to Skip Flanders, Chad Ummel and The Old Stagecoach Inn for their help in researching the story.

## Membership Dues

Check your mailing label. If it does not read 1/1/2017 or higher, you owe dues.  
One person \$10.00 per year.  
Couple living in the same household \$15.00 per year.

## Do You Have Something for the Next Issue of the Newsletter?

### Editor's Note

We would love to hear your stories and memories of Waterbury's past. Do you have a memory of Waterbury that you could write down and send to us to be printed in the Newsletter? Do you have an old photo or two of Waterbury history or Waterbury people that we could print in the Newsletter for all to see? Do you have an old article, paper memorabilia, or other piece of Waterbury history or nostalgia that could be reprinted in the Newsletter? We are always looking for articles, photos and other items to use in the Newsletter. Please send any stories, photos and comments for the next newsletter by March 19, 2016.

You can email them to

w\_kaiser@hotmail.com

or mail them to

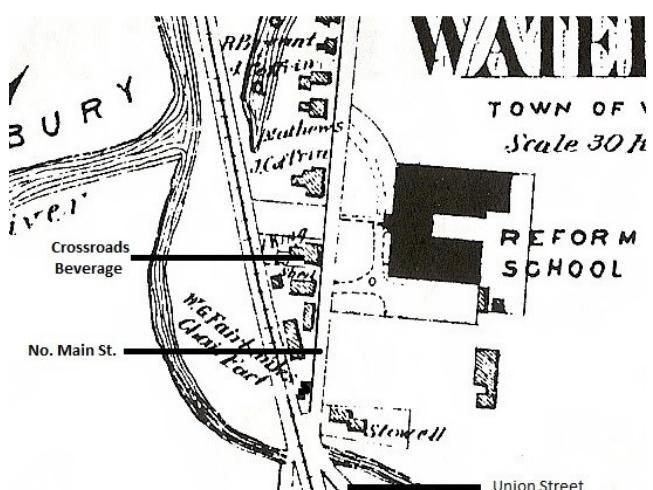
Wesley Kaiser

22 Butler Street

Waterbury, VT 05676

### Editor's Note

To answer Calvin Dow's question, the Reform School was located approximately where the swimming pool and the Interstate Ramp now are.



## **Waterbury Historical Society Fall Meeting**

St. Leo Hall, South Main St.  
October 28, 2015

### Minutes

Approximately 40 in attendance

Theresa Wood, Co-President called the meeting to order

### **Secretary's Report**

Chris Palermo moved and Brian Linder seconded to approve the minutes of the meeting of July printed in the newsletter. Motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report Paul Willard**

The total of assets in all accounts is \$85,936, with \$11,079 in the Capital Campaign account. The Society has paid the town \$100,000 for our share of the History Center. We have \$15,000 in pledges in 2016, \$14,000 in 2017, and \$13,000 in 2018. The society has a bridge loan of up to \$60,000 that can be used if necessary. David Luce moved to accept the treasurer's report seconded by Cheryl Casey and motion passed

### **No Old Business**

### **New Business**

Theresa extended the appreciation of the Historical Society to the Waterbury Grange 237 for their donations to the society. The Grange is closing and donated the historical painted curtain to the Society along with 6 Mitch Segal paintings. The Society is working on making plans to preserve and display the curtain. The audience showed their appreciation to the Grange. A number of people in the audience were grange members including Frances Vaughn and Anne White. The Society winter program may be about the curtain. Co-Operative Insurance and Green Mountain Power were advertisers on the curtain.

### **Announcements**

-Theresa reported that there are tours of the new municipal building and library on Thursdays at 3:30 to 4:30 pm. The construction is ahead of schedule and is expected to be finished in mid-December. The municipal office will move first, the library second, and the history center last in January. There will be an open house and ribbon cutting in February.

-Chris Palermo gave an update on the construction. Chris reported that the goal of the capitol campaign was \$180,000 and the society has received pledges of \$175,000. The society has a 99 year lease with the town. The society will have a security system in place to secure the exhibits when the building is open. Paul **posts pictures** of the construction progress on the Society web two or three times a week.

-Jane Willard reported on the education committee. They

have told the schools that we are available for support with any programs. The Education Committee has begun recording interviews with all the World War II veterans having completed 3 interviews to date. They will then move on to the Korean War veterans and then notable citizens of Waterbury. Jane thanked Cheryl Casey for her help with the technical aspects of the recording.

- The Society continues to work with the Past Perfect Program cataloguing the society artifacts. Sandra Hough has completed her summer internship and is now volunteering 3 days per week.

-Cheryl Casey reported on the recent Wicked Waterbury Ghost walks. It was a great success with 40 people attending, ages 8 to seniors. Shaw's and Cold Hollow Cider donated the refreshments.

-Betty Jones noted in the Recent Yankee Magazine the Waterbury River of Light was mentioned as one of the top 5 events in New England.

-Bill Doyle is also working with Johnson State Students making a DVD on the history of events in Waterbury. Vince Frankie of Peregrine Productions is doing the recording.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Skip Flanders (in Jan's absence)**

### **Program**

Betty Jones introduced the speaker, Brian Linder, who spoke on the History of the Vermont State Police. A number of retired state police officers were present.

### **Board of Directors, Officers and Committees**

April 2015 – April 2016

#### **Co-Presidents:**

Brian Harwood  
Theresa Wood

**Secretary:** Jan Gendreau

**Treasurer:** Paul Willard

**Archivist:** Linda Kaiser

#### **Board of Directors:**

Jane Willard  
David Luce  
Chris Palermo

#### **Program Committee:**

Betty Jones  
Jack Carter  
Cheryl Casey  
Camille Mason  
Grace Sweet  
Nancy Murphy

The above are the voted positions for the Waterbury Historical Society.

Newsletter Editor: Wesley Kaiser

If anyone wishes to contact anyone of the above, write to them in care of Waterbury Historical Society, PO Box 708, Waterbury, VT 05676. To make it easier to direct the mail, please use the persons name in the address.

Waterbury Historical Society Email Address  
[Waterburyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:Waterburyhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

## **Waterbury Historical Society Winter Meeting**

St. Leo Hall, So Main Street Waterbury

Wednesday, January 27, 7pm

Program - Waterbury Center Grange Painted Curtain Stories

We will tell about the 24 Businesses listed on the Curtain



Waterbury Historical Society, Inc.  
PO Box 708  
Waterbury, VT 05676-0708