

History of Waterboro

Social Studies Committee of S.A.D.# 57

Waterboro is an inland town in York County, Maine, containing 22,928 acres of land and 3, 563 acres covered by water. It was originally known as Massabesick Plantation, which included a port of Alfred. It took its name from Massabesick Pond which is now Shaker Pond, and according to legend is said to have gotten its name from an Indian Chief that lived on its western shore around 1764.

Prior to 1768 it was a vast wilderness crossed by only Indian trails and logging roads. The logging roads were built through various parts of the town by settlers from the Atlantic coast who came for the giant pines and oaks to use in shipbuilding. This area was visited only by lumbermen and Sokokis Indians who came for fish and game.

The first permanent white settler was Captain John Smith who came from Kittery in 1768. He settled a short distance from Old Waterborough Corner where he lived until his death. During the next two years he was joined by seven other families who came from the southwestern part of the county, New Hampshire and Mass. to engage in lumbering.

Alexander Jellerson and his son, George settled on the Mast Camp Road leading from Waterboro to Biddeford.

John Scribner settled near the Waterboro Old Corner center.

Robert Harvey settled near the brook that runs east of the North Waterboro Baptist Church.

William Deering settled on what is known as Deerings Ridge. The road was originally known as the highway between North Waterboro Center and Hollis Center.

William Nason and Scammon Hodgdon settled in the northern part of town on the road west of the present highway between Waterboro Center and Limerick.

William Philpot settled on the ridge east of Waterboro Center known as Roberts Ridge frequently called Warren's Ridge.

The land which comprises the present town of Waterboro was originally a part of a large tract of land which was purchased by Major William Phillips from the following Indians: Indian Chief Hombinowitt, Indian Chief Fluellan, Mogg Heigon, and Meeksombe also known as Captain Sunday, during the years of 1660 to 1664.

Major Phillips died in Boston in 1683. By his last will, he bequeathed his lands to his widow and sons Samuel and William. Under the Wills of his sons, the title to the territory passed to a proprietor of ten members, one of whom was Col. Josiah Waters, and for whom the town was named.

Josiah Waters purchased most of the land from the other nine proprietors. The remainder of the land was divided into lots and sold to settlers.

The plantation of Massabesick became incorporated as a town to be known as Waterborough on March 6, 1787 by an act of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The largest of the early settlements in Waterboro was at Waterboro Center, then known as "Carle's Corner" because of the several Carll Families in residence at the time of the town's incorporation. John Carle was the first settler and at the first town meeting he was elected Hayward and Fence Viewer. Ossipee Lake was long known as "Carle's Pond".

John's son Peter, built the "Old Tavern House" at the junction of the five roads accommodated travelers and stage coaches that ran between Boston and Portland. The stage line operated until 1840 when the hotel and stable was run by Porter Gilman.

First in Waterborough:

The first town meeting was held on April 5, 1787.

The first church was organized at the Waterborough Old Corner, on October 27, 1791. The church is still active today.

The first doctor was Dr. Thomas Chase who moved here from Berwick and died in 1825.

The first lawyer, Grove Catlin who came here from Sanford and practiced law here for 15 years.

The first innkeeper was Samuel Dam. The first village was started at Waterborough's Old Corner and the second village was Carl's Corner which is now known as Waterboro Center.

The first school opened in Waterborough in a barn in 1784 taught by Samuel Robinson. Private schools were continued by 3 other male teachers, until 1795 when the town appropriated money for a town school and employed Nathan Hanson as the teacher.

The Railroad:

The early railroad was organized and begun in 1848 in Portland but didn't reach Waterboro until 1863. When the railroad was being built between Alfred and Waterboro, there were plans to build it across a marsh at the upper end of Shaker Pond. Piling was driven into the soft ground and rails were laid. Three carloads of gravel were thrown onto the end of the track to be used as filling. When the men went to work the next day, the cars were missing and had sunk into the ground without a trace. So they had to rebuild the track on solid ground a short distance away. Some years later the railroad

was built to Rochester, N.H. and was known as the Rochester and Portland Railroad.

The Shakers:

The Alfred colony of Shakers was established in 1792 by John Cotton. The adjoining towns of Alfred, Waterboro, and Lyman contained a number of small groups of people with Shakers' beliefs, so they decided to unite, on what's now called Shaker Hill, 1000 acres between Shaker and Bunganut Ponds.

Certain rules were followed by the Shakers such as refraining from marriage and every candidate for admission was required to contribute all his worldly goods to the common ownership. All material things were held in common and no individual had possessions. Open confession was another feature - the men confessing to an elder man, the women to an elder woman.

Ossipee Mountain Fire Tower:

In 1918 a tower was built on 1600 ft. Ossipee Mountain to allow the control man to watch the surrounding lands for fires. Then in 1954 the tower was condemned. This was after the 1947 fire that wiped out much of southern Maine, which caused the public to be concerned about fire prevention. In 1954 a new tower was built in the same place as the old tower.