



# THE WATERBOROUGH

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## PROGRAMS FOR 1979

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
April 5	Do's and Don'ts of Preservation	Jane McGrath will report on various conferences she and others have attended in the last year and how some of the information may be incorporated into our society.
May 3	The Train Wreck at South Waterboro, 1905 Recollection of Waterboro Old Corner School	Everett & Esther Smith will talk about researching and the information found on the train wreck and the old corner school of years ago.
June 7	View and Talk About Historical Society Museum	Please meet at the new museum (Belval Property) to view the building then we will meet to discuss future plans.
July 12	Spinning & Dying	Judi Carll will demonstrate methods of spinning and dying wool. Members are asked to bring examples of their own crafts to display.
August 2	Researching Wildfire Lose	Joyce Butler will tell of her experiences in researching the book "Wildfire Lose" which is about the 1947 fire.
September 6	To be announced	Lowell Innis will be our speaker for the evening - the topic was not available at press time.
October 4	History of Parsons Memorial Library	Joan Sylvester will present a History and will tell of some of the volumes available at Parsons Memorial Library in Alfred. Please meet at the library.

My apologies to Jim & Jane McGrath for omitting their names as the researchers & writers of the article on the 1947 fire in the October 1978 issue. J.C.

## WATERBORO CHURCHES

The following is a compilation done by Evelyn Thompson over the past several years.

### OLD CORNER CHURCH

by Esther L. Smith

The Old Corner Church has sat on a knoll since 1803, below it three roads converge; old roads which were once Indian trails. The surrounding countryside has gone through changes, but outwardly the sturdy white building has been altered little. Protective maples hover inside the white rail fence; old and arthritic, the trees still put forth spring greening, and in autumn they raise crimson and gold torches, visible from afar. Granite steps, (frost heaved and grass-grown), lead to the church level on the east-end of the building where there are two rugged white doors surrounded by wide lintels and flat pillars. Long, slender green blinds cover windows on each side of the doors. Four full-sized windows are on the wall above, lighting the gallery; they also have green blinds that show up against the chalk-white clapboards. On the long side-walls there are three tall, small-paned windows, and the back or west wall is plain except for a slender chimney. The building is prim, unadorned by belfry or bell.

Inside, it is also austere. There is a dark, narrow entry-way with boxed-in stairs leading to the gallery. Two mahogany stained doors open into the sanctuary, where the plain walls are creamy tan, with accents of mahogany around doors and windows. Rows of gray pews, again trimmed with mahogany, march stiffly up along the aisles facing a small platform on the west wall where sits a pulpit, and behind that, a pump organ. Magisterial chairs upholstered in crushed velvet add a dash of color. A small, dark cupboard is fastened to the west wall at the right of the platform, and it contains books from the days of the Sunday School library. A long si-

lent Seth Thomas-type clock graces the south wall. In summer sunshine, shadows of the maple leaves dapple the interior.

Persons with roots in Old Corner and the church, as well as strangers, agree upon the peaceful continuity with the past one senses upon entering the sanctuary, and well they might--a lot of reflections are possible by looking into the mirror of time. Now, back to those days.

The Old Corner community was the first area of town to be settled, and for a number of years there were not enough people of one church affiliation to go it alone, but finally in 1791, eight men of the Baptist persuasion met at the home of Nathaniel Haines on the West Road, with the pastor and delegate from Coxhall, (Lyman) and the pastor and delegate from Shapleigh. A council was formed and articles of faith presented to them which the council found to be "sound in faith and agreeable to the truths of the Gospel." They were given a full fellowship as a regular Baptist Church of Christ. Meetings were held in homes with various preachers. Peletiah Tingley was one of the first preachers in town, and he was said to be getting ready to read his message one Sunday when the wind sprang up and carried the papers out the window. This so effected him that he considered it a reproof from God, and he changed to a Free Will Baptist, whose sermons were extemporaneous.

In 1794, Brother Henry Smith of Alfred was asked to become "pastoral teacher." It was voted: "Brother Smith shall receive a reasonable compensation from us for our wordly goods from time to time so as to make him comfortable, that he may be better able to discharge his ministerial duties as long as God in his all wise providence shall continue him among us." He preached 42 years. Upon retiring he said: "I have preached 40 years, I have not missed 40 Sabbaths, I have not received \$40.00." Fortunately, he owned a farm on Federal Street, currently the Graber residence, and he made a living farming. Elder Smith was

ordained at the home of Samuel Dam, with elders and brothers from five churches present. Apparently he was a beloved and eloquent minister, from 1794 until 1834. In August, 1797, the Clerk recorded: "At a number of conferences in June and July attended with marks of the Divine Savior and great power, both to Saints and Sinners, and the work of God went on wonderfully, and blessed be His holy name for his glorious grace in this church."

In 1803 the following was voted: "Agreed to build a meetinghouse fifty feet long and forty feet wide, and to be built or stand at Waterboro Corner, or in other words where the old meeting house now stands." There has been much speculation as to what the old building was, but no well founded answers. Tradition has it that lumber for the church was cut some four or five miles up over the hills near Middle Branch Pond. The whole structure cost less than \$2,000, with funds raised by auctioning off pew rights. Samuel Dam got pew number one for \$42.00 and others went as high as \$71.00. Among those buying were Samuel Roberts, #11, for \$50.00, and Jonathan Knox, #32, for \$70.00. It took most people a long time to pay off the notes they signed, and many sacrifices were necessary.

Work was put out to bids, and John Scribner was low bidder on the frame work, for \$368.00. The exterior was done for \$650.00 by Benjamin Warren. "Outside to be boarded, shingled and clapboarded. Blazed windows to be twenty eight squares below and twenty four above, with glass 7x9, the sash to be primed, the trimmings painted." Elder Henry Smith won the bid on the underpinning, at a cost of \$190.00. Samuel Dam did the rest of the work. The interior was painted dark mahogany, the outside white, with a slate-colored roof.

The floor sloped from the doors in the rear; a sounding board soared over the high pulpit. Pews were box-type with gates at the aisles. There was no heating unit; in cold weather folks dressed accordingly and brought small metal boxes

with live charcoal in them, for foot warmers.

Records are sparse until into the eighteen hundreds, then they tell of business meetings, list the members, and report of gatherings when arguments or acts unworthy of church members were explored. Committees were appointed to pursue the troubles and report back, and if satisfaction was not gained, the person was dismissed from the rolls. Here is one dated June 17, 1823: "Inquired respecting a report of Brother R. against Brother N.R. and said to be told to Brother P. and wife, that Brother R. told them Brother N.R. had starved Hannah Hutchins while at his house, and the church requested Brother R. to go to Brother P. and get him and wife to testify what he said, and they both said he never reported any such thing of that kind to them and the church was satisfied, and voted to be satisfied." And another: "Voted to drop H.B. from church for disorderly walk and non-compliance with the rules of the church."

From the minutes of April 30, 1831: "This day the church voted to become a Missionary Society and each member to pay at least one cent a month--one half for domestic missions and the other Foreign Missions. There has been a missionary society in the church for several years but not till now has the church as a body united in this work." On a margin is noted: "To three pounds of candles--45¢."

Folks from over Alfred Gore way had always made the trip to church from the Gore road, up over the hill to Saywards Ridge, then down the West Road to the church, and on July 17, 1844 they petitioned to be dismissed and form their own church, in the Gore. "Thinking the time has come in the providence of God when we should come off from your body to form a separate body." The following were dismissed and formed the nucleus of North Alfred Baptist Church: Jonathan Jewett, B. F. Goodrich, Henry Bean, F. Ricker, Thomas Ricker, Susan Jewett, Mary Bean, Eliza Marshall, Mary Russell, Lydia Good-

rich, Sally Roberts, Mercy Gile, Susannah Ricker.

The Old Corner Church, rightfully the First Baptist Church of Waterboro, was commonly known as "the Meetin' House." It was remodeled in 1849, at a cost of \$1732.00. The roof was lowered 7 feet, the side galleries removed, as well as the sounding board and high pulpit, and the pews were changed. Elder Sanborn, by vote of the members, took some of the panels and made a spit box for every pew. What progress! The building was rededicated, and at that time there was a "gracious revival, over 30 confessing Christ by baptism."

In 1863 there were 123 members, and a Sunday School of 120, with 10 teachers. On Sunday, all roads led to the church, one of the largest in the county.

The Civil War touched the community, and thus the church. Deacon William Cummings was a member of the First Maine Cavalry and he was killed in battle in Virginia. Brother Benjamin Ricker died in Virginia from wounds, and Joseph Sayward died in a hospital in Maryland from wounds and fever, leaving three motherless children at home, to mention a few.

Under Waterboro news, The Biddeford Weekly Journal, Friday, May 30, 1890, reported: "The Baptist Society at Old Corner seems to be prospering notwithstanding hard times and small numbers. They have shingled the church and are newly grading around it, which improves the look very much. They have preaching every Sunday at 2:30 p.m., a prosperous Sunday School and expect to hold their own and gain new numbers and strength."

The interior of the building was "thoroughly repaired at nearly \$400.00 in May 1891", evidently getting ready for the one hundredth anniversary celebration, held November 11. The clerk, Etta Gile, wrote a glowing account of the festivities. The weather was warm with misty rain. Services were held all morning, followed by a

bountiful dinner at the parsonage where tables were set up. Then a long afternoon session, and another in the evening. The Zion's Advocate, a religious paper published in Portland, gave an excellent history of the church in their November 25 edition, that year. Still another religious publication wrote of the centennial celebration, giving praise to the committee of arrangements. "The house which has recently been remodeled and made extremely inviting and pleasant was tastefully decorated with an arch spanning the pulpit platform covered with evergreen, on which were these significant words in gilt letters: 'Thou hast established, It abideth'". The article ended: "The hospitality of the people was abundant, and all departed with the hope that God would continue to deal kindly with this old church at Waterboro.

Plans for an ice cream social were mentioned in the minutes of June, 1893. One still hears mention of the gatherings and of the various flavored, rich ice cream brought from homes, with the freezers well iced and muffled with shorts, bags and old blankets. Large ironstone coffee mugs were spooned full, costing a few cents. A teenager known for his voracious appetite was asked what flavor he had just eaten as he finished his first mug of the evening. "G-golly," he replied, "I don't know--I didn't stop to taste!" There is also fond mention of bean suppers put on in the gallery, by some who were fortunate to attend when young.

Amusing happenings have been handed down through families. One is the time a mouse ran up a matron's well skirted leg, during a sermon. Under five feet, the tiny lady reached down and grasped the animal just above her knee, through the cloth. When the service was over she calmly shook the suffocated mouse out of her long garments. A lecherous member of the community was persuaded, reluctantly, to go to a revival meeting in Waterboro Center with and Old Corner group. He sat in the back row against the wall, and

when the service closed he bumped his head a smart crack as he stood up. He let out a loud oath, and the minister, thinking he had another convert, shouted "Hallelujah! Another soul saved." But alas, it was not so. A deacon claimed he learned to swear in Sunday School by crouching down behind a pew, fisting his fellow members, listening to them exclaim.

The church was closed from October 1887 to July, 1889. It is recorded that by an unanimous vote it was decided to hold meetings at South Waterboro, "hereafter." Services were held at Good Templars Hall until 1889. "Voted we recind the vote whereby we voted to hold our meetings at South Waterboro, to take effect at the close of this meeting." Dissention had caused problems but not a word was written in the records, and what happened has been lost in time. Twenty-six requested dismissal to form a new church at South Waterboro, and the request was granted August 31, 1889.

The ladies of the church were diligent in working to help with finances, and in keeping the parsonage repaired inside; papering, painting and cleaning when a new family was expected. It is cloudy as to when the parsonage was purchased, but mention of it was made in the writings about the 100 year celebration. It was the gracious old building now owned by Roger Morrill, just down the road from the church.

Ladies Aid meetings were well attended. A member, Ruth H. Smith, wrote of one session, circa 1911:

I can think of many interesting meetings in the different homes by the ladies of the church to sew for our annual supper and sale of aprons, quilts, etc. I remember meetings held at the homes of Lizzie Davis, Ada Downs, Maude Kimball, Susie Andrews, Addie Smith, Ida Roberts, and several others.

To give you an idea of those

meetings, I will tell you of one that stands out in my memory.

We were invited to hold a meeting at the home of Laura Pierce or "Lorrie Purse" as everyone called her. We drove up over the hills on a crisp winter day with sleigh bells jingling in the clear air.

When we reached the top of the hill where the Pierce home stood, over the tops of evergreen trees laden with sparkling snow we could see the Presidential Range, with Mount Washington standing out white and clear.

We were given a cordial welcome and told to lay our wraps in the bedroom. After thirty-five years I still remember the room--the white spread and lace pillow-shams--the homemade rugs on the floor--the fat pin-cushion on the bureau--and in one corner, a washstand with the most beautiful old fashioned mulberry washstand and pitcher I have seen. We spent the forenoon in the cozy sittingroom and at noontime were invited into the farm kitchen for a roast pork dinner. I remember the long table, so inviting with the beautiful old fashioned dishes, and the delicious food. I remember Mr. Charles Pierce, the man of the house, greeting us in his hearty manner, and urging: "Now girls, don't be bashful, take right hold and help yourselves."

In the afternoon more sewing, and if Maude Kimball was chairman of the work woe be unto us if we failed to do our work well!

When we left in the afternoon, Mrs. Pierce stood in the door, solicitous that we were well wrapped for the ride home. Then with sleigh bells ringing and the sky aglow with the winter sunset, we drove home. Pleasant memories, those.

Ruth H. Smith also wrote of the Fourth of July picnics sponsored by the Sunday School each year, well attended by

## Old Corner families, at Ossipee Lake:

On the morning of the 4th, families would start driving to the lake, each carriage laden with scrubbed, happy children, huge picnic baskets, ice-cream freezers, etc. The children were soon in the water after we arrived, dressed in bathing-suits quite different from the present day bathing apparel. The mothers would busy themselves making lemonade and getting ready for the sumptuous picnic dinner. It would seem strange to attend a picnic now (note, circa 1945) in a dress that actually touched the ground, but they dressed that way 35 years ago. The fathers upon arriving were careful to make sure the horses were in a safe and comfortable place for the day, ever keeping a watchful eye on the youngsters in the water. The day would be spent in boating, bathing, etc., and usually Herman Tucker would give an exhibition of his famous dive into the lake. At close of day the teams would start homeward with both children and grown-ups sunburned and tired. They had eaten too much and exercised too much but were happy.

As we drove home through Waterboro Village, mischievous boys would dart out and throw fire crackers to make our horses jump.

Membership dwindled at Old Corner as new churches were established from the Mother Church: North Alfred, Waterboro Village, (later called Blaisdell Memorial) and Ross Corner. With the coming of cars, and the move toward city living, population in the section dropped. All this led to the decision to hire a supply minister when the Rev. Danville Gammon announced his retirement in 1925. Mr. Gammon gave several years service which was kindly and gentle, but strong in faith and bible teaching. His tiny, hardy wife lent color, and her candied grapefruit peel which she made to raise money for her benevolences was known far and wide. She cut a swath through many gatherings, sell-

ing her wares. Rev. Elmer Mossman from the Alfred Congregational Church came and preached at nine o'clock Sunday mornings to a small, appreciative group. Maude Kimball cheerfully played the pump organ, although her musical experience was small. Her husband built a fire in cold weather in one of the two box-type stoves which were at each side of the sanctuary, put there when the room was renovated in 1849. The worshippers gathered on the warm side, with the faint odor of wood smoke and dust ever present. Rev. Charles Stevens followed Rev. Mossman; he too, was enjoyed, and his succinct messages, always divided into three thoughts, left all with spiritual food for the week. By the 1940's the church opened only in warm weather, and soon that, too, stopped.

Waterboro Grange has held an annual worship service since 1917, on the second Sunday in August, and it is also an Old Home Sunday, where one meets friends that one day of the year. The Rev. Dr. Twomey, a colorful summer resident, preached the sermon for many years. He died in 1949, and for a while Rev. Lester Holmes, a Waterboro native, ably filled the pulpit. Since then Mr. Holmes' son-in-law, Rev. Stanley Mugridge has brought inspiring addresses. Elizabeth Brock gets remarkably sweet music from the old organ, purchased in 1911, also the year electricity was installed. Beloved old hymns are sung, and memorial flowers grace the front. Many remark on the fine condition of the shut-up structure. A Society, made up of the several members, and church friends, meets each year before the Grange service, conducting such business matters as need attention.

At the 150 anniversary celebration, August 2, 1953, Deacon Ivory H. Smith began his historical sketch thus:

"We have met today to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the building of this meeting house and to go back over memory lane and beyond, to those days when this section of the province of Maine was more or less

a pioneer country, and we were part of the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

A quotation from Goethe reads as follows: 'Happy the man who thinks of his ancestors with pride, who likes to tell of their deeds and greatness, and rejoices to feel himself linked to the end of their goodly chain.'

Church clerk Alice Brock Pike wrote an encompassing history which was read by her brother, Philip Brock, at the 175th celebration, October 21, 1966.

A special Bicentennial worship service in July, 1976, was a solemn reminder of the rich heritage from God and Country.

Since 1791, seventeen men have served as Deacon: Archibald Smith, Simon Haines, Archibald Smith, Jr., Noah Ricker, William Johnson, Daniel Andrews, Frank Blaisdell, James Pierce, Davis Brock, Nathaniel Gile, Ivory C. Smith, Joshua Phoenix, Edward Langley; Charles Andrews, Ivory H. Smith, D. A. Gammon, M. Joseph Twomey.

It is interesting in reading the precious records, that until Etta Gile became clerk, there was no female as an officer. The following served their church as clerk: Nathaniel Haines, Henry Smith, Archibald Smith, James H. Pierce, L. S. Tripp, Henry Gile, S. H. Roberts, W. B. Johnson, John S. Sanborn, Etta S. Gile, Lizzie Davis, Ruth H. Smith, Ivory H. Smith, and the present clerk, Alice Brock Pike.

Of the 17 settled pastors, the one who seems to be remembered most often is Jack Hyde, who came in 1913, from Virginia. He apparently had a vivacious and unpredictable nature. He formed a parish consisting of the Baptist churches of Old Corner, East Waterboro, Alfred Mills, and North Alfred, and he conducted services in all these for several years. He went to a Billy Sunday service in Boston, and for a while after the Old Corner folks had a pretty good idea how the famous revivalist conducted himself. Mr. Hyde ran around the platform, jumped

on chairs, gestured and shouted as they had heard Mr. Sunday did. It was told that the congregation would attend a formal meeting dressed in their best, and Jack Hyde might attend in a khaki Boy Scout suit. At an informal meeting he strolled in, dramatically in full evening dress, complete with silk hat and cane! He attracted people from afar, and his ministry was earnest and effective. He climaxed his activities by building the church at Ross Corner. Evidently writing was one of his many fortes because he published a book during this time, and his dedication amused the people: "To the loyal people of the first union parish of Maine, who with me on the frontier of the great North Woods have lived, toiled and sacrificed." He resigned to go into war work, and was followed by Oscar Stuart, a self sacrificing, beloved minister to his people.

All the pastors were hard working and dedicated christians, with loyal families who left their imprint upon the community and its spiritual life.

The white building sits sphinx-like facing the east, holding within its walls tinges of many people and their strivings. Gone the clatter of teams laboring up Blaisdell's Hill, gone the happy sound of children playing in school yard nearby, gone the tinkle of cow bells in the fast disappearing pastures. Planes drone overhead and cars speed by, but nearly two hundred years of happenings are cradled in the walls of the venerable edifice. One wonders if all are still present there in the building on the knoll, below which the old Indian paths converge.



## RESPONSES TO INQUIRIES

The following information submitted by Linda Hasscom.

### Hannah Harmon/James Smith inquiry:

Hannah Harmon was born June 18, 1817, in Buxton - daughter of Nathaniel Harmon and Joanna Redlon.

Nathaniel Harmon married Joanna Redlon May 23, 1813 in Buxton.

Nathaniel Harmon was born September 14, 1775, in York, son of Nathaniel Harmon and Mary Kingsbury.

### Thomas Smith/Sally Cole inquiry:

Thomas Smith married Sally Cole August 2, 1827, in Buxton.

Thomas Smith was born April 15, 1809, in Readfield, Maine - son of Thomas Smith (mother not listed).

Lots of Thomas Smiths were listed, but none of Standish.

### Simeon Walker inquiry:

Simeon Walker was born in Madison, Maine, on October 6, 1789 - son of Stephen Walker and Sybil Williams.

### Abigail Johnson/Hill inquiry:

Abigail Johnson was christened in Greenland, New Hampshire, in 1719. She was the daughter of Nathan Johnson (mother not mentioned).

## WATERBORO - HISORY AND EARLY TOWN RECORDS by James E. Carll Part III

In the last issue of "The Waterborough" an early history of the town and important events that occurred up to the year 1816 were recorded.

In 1817 the town voted to raise \$1600 to repair roads, \$350 to run the schools, \$1000 to defray the expenses of the town.

Buffons Brook Bridge was again under discussion in 1817 - three articles dealt with the bridge the first was "Voted to choose one man to keep Buffons Brook Bridge so called in repair until after haying this year" the second was "Voted to build said bridge anew this year after haying," and three "Voted to put the said bridge up to auction. Voted to postpone the same until the last Tuesday in August at 1 o'clock in the afternoon on the spot." On August 26th the "on the spot" meeting was held and the following votes taken 1) voted to build the bridge solid with timber, the bridge to be twenty feet wide and covered with sand. 2) voted that all surveyors

of highways be notified to hire on men in their respective districts in the town at stated periods as they shall be notified by a committee to build said bridge. Their wages to be four shillings per day. 3) voted to reconsider last vote. 4) voted to let the bridge to the lowest bidder. Bid off by William Thing at \$244.

In 1818 according to Massachusetts law the Selectment of Waterboro and Alfred met to preambulate the line between the towns. They met at the northeast corner of the town of Alfred at a rock at the corner of Lyman & southeast corner of Waterboro. Said rock is in the Shaker's pasture lettered and established as the corner of said towns thence north forty-six degrees and forty-five minutes went to a bunch of small maples & birches lettered with the letters J.S.A.S.S.B. on it and the north corner of Alfred and the southwest corner of Waterboro.

Also in 1818 the offices of Constable and Collector was made inot one office. Other important items voted in this year were the 12th article voted to raise \$2000 to repair the roads. 13th voted to raise \$350 for schools, 14th voted to raise \$750 for town expenses. 15th voted not to raise any money to buy wood for schools, but every district find their own. 16th voted not to keep hogs shut up the present year. 21st voted not to build a poor house.

At another meeting the same year, it was voted to rebuild Edgecomb's Bridge. The bridge was to be 12 or 13 feet solid covered with sawed plank three inches thick & twenty feet long. It was bid off to Col. John Hamilton at sixty-five dollars.

IN 1819 it was voted to pay 10¢ per hour for work on the roads. On July 17 the male inhabitanted voted in favor of the separate & independent state of Maine from Massachusetts by a vote of 61 to 37.

At a meeting on October 8, it was voted 1) to build a powder house 2) to build it 6 feet square 3) to build it in Mr. Taylor's pasture near the pond & the house to be 7 feet high 4) voted that it be built with a frame double boarded & slated inside & painted red 5) bid off to Humphrey Chadbourne at \$10.

(to be continued)