



# THE WATERBOROUGH

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## BLAISDELL MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH, SOUTH WATERBORO, MAINE

by Janet Belknap Randel, July 1978

July 6, 1889, a group of twenty-six members of the First Baptist Church at Waterborough Old Corner organized a society which was recognized by the state Baptist Council in September of that year as the South Waterboro Baptist Church. One of the leaders of the new group was Frank W. Blaisdell (1845-1931), who in 1883 had moved from his Lyman farm to the Old Corner house that he bought from his mother-in-law, Mrs. James Hamilton Peirce, widow of Waterboro's long-time physician. She and her unmarried daughter Emma continued to live there, in what is now called Peirce Farm, with the Blaisdell family.

A former deacon of the First Baptist Society at Goodwin Mills, Frank Blaisdell soon became active in the Old Corner church and in Waterboro town affairs, being elected a Selectman in 1888. South Waterboro had become the busiest and largest village in the town, and, boasting a hotel and other public buildings, had outgrown its old nickname of Scratch Corners. But it had no church, and no cemetery. Mr. Blaisdell took the lead in correcting these deficiencies. He purchased land and organized the Pine Grove Cemetery, and served as chairman of the building Committee of the new Baptist church. At its dedication on March 5, 1880, as chairman he could announce that the entire cost had been raised and that the building was free of debt. Mr. H. R. Hatch

a student at Colby College, was the supply minister the first winter. Other later pastors were Rev. William Moore, Rev. H. M. Heywood, Rev. E. B. Dolan, Rev. E. F. Mitchell, Rev. G. C. Marston, and Rev. A. G. Murray.

The church building, not far from the railroad depot, had a seating capacity of two hundred. A small vestry in front opened to the auditorium through folding doors. Above the vestry was a gallery and above that a tower. Behind the pulpit was the baptistry, usually hidden by a moveable screen, and on either side was a small room. A furnace supplied heat and two six-lamp chandeliers furnished light by electricity. Both were new innovations for Waterboro. The cost was \$4500, with the state Baptist convention providing \$1900. The plans were drawn by John Calvin Stevens (1855-1940) a rising Portland architect, who had also designed the First Baptist Church building of Sanford (1889), still in use. Another nearby Stevens building is the recently restored City Theatre in Biddeford.

On July 12, 1911, the South Waterboro Baptist Church was destroyed by the fire that left much of the village in ashes. Services were continued, however in the Free Will Baptist Chapel at the lower end of the village. In July 1913, Rev. A. N. Chandler became the new pastor succeeding Rev. Murray.

Money was raised for a new church building, with Dr. F. H. Hobbs as chairman of the committee. Other members were Deacon Blaisdell, Deacon J. S. Sanborn, Charles Brackett, and Myron Huff. Mr. Blaisdell contributed a substantial amount in memory of his father, Deacon John W. Blaisdell (1818-

1863) of Lyman, and as a result the society re-organized as the Blaisdell Memorial Baptist Church. The dedication took place September 25, 1913, in connection with the Cumberland Baptist Association meeting at the new church. Over four hundred people were present. The sermon was by the Rev. M. J. Twomey, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Portland, who for many years had a summer home in Waterboro on Star Hill Road.

Dr. Hobbs announced that the building was free of debt. The Ladies Aid, the Christian Endeavor Society, and the Sunday School had assisted in raising funds. Mrs. F. H. Hobbs became Clerk, Dr. Hobbs was Treasurer, and F. W. Blaisdell, John S. Sanborn and Robert Smith were named deacons. The new structure, somewhat the same plan as the original Stevens church, was erected on Main Street about a block and a half from the site of the building that had burned. The exterior was white clap-board rather than the dark shingle of its predecessor. Both had book collections. A catalog of the first shows 93 books of all types, and the 1915 listing for the Blaisdell church shows 326 books.

Following Rev. Chandler's ministry the pastors have been H. E. Knight, E. P. Moulton, A. A. Walsh, Mrs. A. A. Walsh, Samuel Thompson, M. B. Giles, Lester Norton, Harry Palmer, Chester Staples, Harold Nutter, Harvey Cassaboom, Reginald Dunlap (interim pastor), Lester Holmes (interim pastor), John Page, Carleton Maines, Mrs. Edna Emmons served twenty-four years as Clerk, with her first term beginning in 1942.

In 1928 Deacon Blaisdell purchased the Free Will Baptist Chapel on lower Main Street, which no longer was used, and had it moved to a position adjacent to the Blaisdell Memorial Baptist Church in memory of his wife Lucy Peirce Blaisdell (1842-1927). The chapel has had various functions during the years; at present it is used as a multi-purpose building for many activities.

The parsonage on Pearl Street was burned in the 1947 fire. Land was purchased on lower Main Street and the present parsonage was built there in 1948. During the period since 1969 when Carleton Mains became pastor, the basement of the church building has been remodeled into an educational facility for Sunday School purposes. Also the Daney property just north of the church lot has been acquired. The Blaisdell Church continues to serve the town and nearby communities.

The Chapel at the Blaisdell Memorial Church was built by the Second Free Will Baptist Society known as Bullakites or followers of Elder Jere Bullock. This Society recognized no name but Free Will Baptists.

The land for this church was purchased from Albert H. Roberts for 50.00 dollars in 1897. It was situated on the easterly side of the road leading to Alfred (lower Main Street, Waterboro Village). No records of the meetings have been found but older residents recall attending meetings when Elder Cotten was pastor.

### ELDER GREY MEETING HOUSE

by Mrs. Eva D. Shapleigh

In 1806 a church was built at the foot of Ossipee Pond in North Waterboro. Nothing is known of the first pastor, but one of the early ones was Elder James Grey of Lyman. He was born in 1784 and married Anna Woodard of Waterboro in 1807. This well-loved pastor who served the parish for many years died in 1856 and lies with his wife in the cemetery across from the church.

In 1832 the Meeting House was moved to its present site in order to be nearer the aging pastor and possibly to accommodate the growing number of families who were living on the hills and ridges to the north in this area. In those days Joseph and Samuel Bradeen, brothers, owned farms on opposite sides of the road. Joseph gave the site where the old Meeting House was placed and Samuel gave land across the road for the cemetery.

Following the pastorate of Elder Grey, Elder Buzzell, born in Parsonsfield in 1807 and ordained in 1834, became pastor. He served his people well and was later a chaplain in the Civil War. During this period it was said, (and I quote from old Church Records) "A great blessing of God succeeds our last association in Waterboro which a few - a very few years ago was a waste, howling wilderness." This refers to the great religious revival which occurred there. Of this revival Elder Grey is quoted as saying, "I cut and piled, and cut and piled, and Brother Buzzell came along and touched the match to it."

There is no record for several years of those who served as ministers and the organization as a functioning

church gradually disappeared. The last member was Mrs. Amanda Lord Chase.

Late in the 1890's the people became interested in holding services in the church in spite of the state of disrepair of the building. A young theological student, John Best, was sent from Northfield to serve as pastor for the summer vacation. He was paid \$180 by the Congregational Board. He lived with different families. All the homes in the community were opened for his entertainment. He was a good leader, a fine singer and was well liked. It was not long before such an interest was aroused that repairs were made on the building inside and outside. The interior was completely restored, window glass replaced, a new roof put on, etc. through the generosity of the residents and of friends abroad.

The following summer another student continued Sunday evening services in a hall in North Waterboro, thinking this place more central. From this time on there was no continuity in the services held in the Meeting House. Occasionally ministers and able laymen who were available would hold meetings. Among those remembered were Rev. James Stevens, Mr. John Lord, a teacher, and Rev. F. C. Bradeen.

In old records, the church was listed and known as a Union Church and was affiliated with the Baptists. Many of these facts were taken from the Baptists records.

There followed now a period of inactivity and lack of interest on the part of the people concerning the condition of the church until about thirty years ago.

You older ones will remember the early formation of the Pilgrimage of this Association and the beginning of the yearly anniversary service. The sad neglect of the building had caused it to be in such a delapidated condition that it was considered useless. A few of the residents with the help of others away felt it possible that the old landmark could be restored as a Memorial to our ancestors. This interested group is a closely-knit association of neighbors and friends and are descended from the founders and supporters of this church who lie peacefully sleeping across the way.

The natural outcome of seeing the condition of the old cemetery resulted in the most successful effort to bring it to its present state. A sum of money was bequeathed to the cemetery by Rev. F. C. Bradeen. Due to complications in settling his estate it was fin-

ally released by the executor, Rev. Stearns, only on the proviso that it be established in a trust fund, the income of which goes for the perpetual care of the cemetery. From time to time other gifts have been added to this trust fund.

It is the hope of your historian who for a lifetime has had a deep interest in and love for this community that you younger ones who will take up the mantle will go forward in a spirit of love and unity.

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."  
Phil: 3:13, 14.

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#### HELP WANTED

Eleanor Whitehouse is collecting information and names of people who worked at the Johnson Lumber Mill during its operating life. Anyone knowing names of persons who worked there please contact her at 247-4645.

#### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you are interested in joining the Waterborough Historical Society, please clip and mail the following application form.

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#### WATERBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: \$2.00 per year, Life Membership, \$15.00.

Mail to:

JEAN GRANT  
NORTH WATERBORO  
MAINE 04061

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## WATERBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

When the Peter Belval house became the property of the town of Waterboro in 1978, the Waterborough Historical Society decided the house would be an ideal permanent home and a museum.

By researching the deeds at the York County Court House, it was established that the house was built before 1830 and was originally owned by John Hamilton. Hamilton was the original proprietor of a large tract of land which included the 2/3 acre piece that was Belval property.

The concept of a meeting house and museum for the Historical Society grew slowly — first by a few of the members, and then by more and more as interest grew. These people were involved in the early discussions and planning stages. Finally in mid-winter, a small group met with the Selectmen of Waterboro to present the plans of what could be done with the house for the townspeople as well as the Historical Society, if it could be saved rather than torn down. This group was asked on two occasions to present their plans to the Finance Committee of Waterboro, and to give them an article for the Warrent for town meeting. The article was accepted by the Finance Committee and the Selectmen, which gave the Society members great encouragement. A rigorous campaign was undertaken prior to town meeting and it proved to be successful. The article was voted on by the citizens of Waterboro, passed, and the Historical Society now has a 99 year lease on the town owned property. The citizens agreed with the Historical Society members that a town museum was a worthwhile concept.

Soon after town meeting, several weekends were spent by a fair sized group of people with several trucks, cleaning out the house and barn. Everything had to be removed and after much sorting, part of the contents went into storage and part went to the dump.

At this same time a young man, Barry Thompson of Ross Corner, agreed to take down the barn for the

materials in it. He has hopes of reconstructing the barn at his own house, as it has stood in Waterboro Center all these years. The barn was equally as old as the house, but it couldn't be saved as the space is needed for the new addition to the town house.

There was a meeting of the Historical Society in June which met at the Museum, for an inspection of what the Society now controls; and to give all the members a sound idea of the amount of restoration work which lies ahead. At the same time there was a discussion of possible ways to finish the inside, and all the varied uses the house can be put to. A strong possibility is that the downstairs will be finished as a three room period museum, and the upstairs (which is now an open chamber) will become a meeting and reading room. Probably ideas will change many times before the project is complete—that's part of the fun.

It has been agreed that this year before cold weather, the museum will undergo a complete exterior face lift. The roof will be repaired, the porch will be removed, the windows will be replaced, and the entire building will be scraped, caulked and painted.

The Society members are very excited about the museum, and it means that there will finally be a secure place in town for the collection, storage, and display of the history (manuscripts, art, artifacts, etc.) which is the town of Waterboro.

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## JOHNSON LUMBER MILL

The Johnson Lumber Mill will be open to the public Sunday afternoons from 2—4:00, commencing with July 15. There will be a member of the Historical Society there to answer questions and talk about the Mill while it is open.

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## CRAFT FAIR "79"

The 5th Annual Craft Fair will be held at Johnson's Lumber Mill on August 4th at 10:00 a.m. If you have any items to donate please contact:

White Elephant	Elaine Kimball 247-5481
Crafts	Alice Hanscom 247-5493
Plants	Mabel Annett 324-7765
	Judi Carll 247-5878
Books	Arlene Jellerson 247-5268
Children's Table	Jeannie Grant 247-5332

There will be a Snack Bar where you can get a lunch and members will be solicited for the Baked Foods table. Raffle tickets are available now—please contact either Jeannie Grant or Jane McGrath (247-5086) for books of tickets to sell.

The Museum Room will feature an exhibit on spinning this year. Judi Carll will be at her spinning wheel in the afternoon.

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## WATERBORO CENTER — CARLE'S CORNER

Studies of an 1859 map of Waterboro show that Waterboro Center was formerly known as Carle's Corner. Many Carle's lived in this area in the early days of the town.

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## FLEA MARKET AND FOOD SALE

Saturday, July 14, 1979 10:00 a.m.  
South Waterboro Fire Barn

The Historical Society will hold a food sale, and rent space for a flea market (no food tables please) on the above date. To reserve your space contact Alice Hanscom, at 247-5493.

## WATERBORO — HISTORY AND EARLY TOWN RECORDS (cont.)

by James E. Carll

The last newsletter concluded information in the first town record book. The following is a complete account of the annual town meeting for 1825:

At a legal meeting of the inhabitants of the town of Waterborough qualified to vote in town affairs holden on Monday the fourth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-five the said inhabitants voted as follows—to wit:

- 1st Chose Capt. Samuel Carle, Moderator to regulate said meeting.
- 2nd Chose Orlando Bagley, Town Clerk and sworn by Phinehas Ricker, Esq.
- 3rd Voted to accept the report of the committee on town accounts.
- 4th Voted for the Selectmen to be Assessors.
- 5th Chose Phinehas Ricker, Esq. for the lower Selectmen.
- 6th Voted to choose one Selectman in the upper part of the town.
- 7th Chose Capt. John Hill for one Selectman in the upper part of the town.
- 8th Chose Col. John Hamilton for one Selectman in the middle part of the town; said Selectman sworn by Henry Hobbs, Esq.
- 9th Chose Orlando Bagley, Town Treasurer.
- 10th Voted to set up at auction to the lowest bidder the collector and the collector to be constable.
- 11th Benjamin Hamilton bid off the collector's office at twenty dollars.
- 12th Voted to raise five hundred dollars to defray the town's expenses the present year.
- 13th Voted not to draw any orders of abatement after one year from the time of the commitment to the collector.
- 14th Voted to reconsider the vote passed to raise five hundred dollars.
- 15th Voted to raise seven hundred dollars to defray the town's expenses the present year.
- 16th Chose Col. John Hamilton, Agent for the town the present year.

- 17th Voted to raise three thousand dollars to repair the highways the present year.
- 18th Voted to allow one dollar and twenty-five cents per day for work on the highway before the first of July and seventy-five cents after and two thirds of the money to be expended before the first of July next and the other third by the first of October.
- 19th Voted for each district to nominate their own surveyors.
- (No 20th)
- 21st Chose Jeremiah Roberts, Jr., Simon Allen, John Fisk, Jr., David Bowdoin, John Hill, Jr., John Lassell, Adrial Hamilton, Jotham Coffin, John Nason, Shadwick Wentworth, Joseph Bradeen, James Jellerson, Isaac Eaton, Col. Samuel Bradeen, Andrew Carpenter, Simeon Knight, Samuel Dam, Nathaniel Hobbs, Ivory Allen, Joseph Garey, Col. John Hamilton, Isaac Dearing, William Swett, Silas Carle, Abner Thing, and Eliot R. Bowdoin, Surveyors of highways the present year.
- 22nd Voted to exempt Elder James Gray and Jotham Cole from their highway tax the present year.
- 23rd Voted for the Shakers to take the road to keep in repair for their usual tax from the Guide Port near Samuel Carle, Jr., to Limerick Road near Miles Ford's.
- 24th Chose Nathaniel Emery, Benjamin R. Hamilton and Isaac Dearing for a superintending school committee.
- 25th Voted to give Capt. Samuel Carle two dollars for his services as moderator up to this date.
- 26th Voted for Mr. Garland to have pay for own iron bar a building Felches Bridge.
- 27th Voted to divide highway district by Joseph Hoopers at the line between said Hooper and William Dearing, Jr., Esq.
- 28th Chose Tristram Hooper surveyor of said new district.
- 29th Voted to leave it at the discretion of the moderator to take bids on the collector's office.
- 30th Andrew Roberts bid off the constable and collectors office for forty-five dollars to do all town business as constable.
- 31st Voted to accept Andrew Roberts as collector with Samuel Bradeen, Esq., Capt. Joseph Wentworth, Benjamin Hamilton, and John Weymouth for Bondsmen.
- 32nd Voted to adjourn this meeting to the first Monday in May at two o'clock in the afternoon.
- 33rd Voted to hold the annual town meeting in April as usual.
- 34th Chose Aaron Gowen, John Bowdoin, Esq., John Fisk, Jr., Peter Warren, Eli Chase, Tristram Hooper, John Gilpatrick, Joseph Bradeen, Orlando Bagley, Samuel Bradeen, Esq., Samuel Dam, Capt. Joseph Wentworth Benjamin T. Hall, William Tibbets, Humphrey Clark, Andrew Hasty, Luke Mills, Samuel Boothby and Adrial Hamilton, Tythingmen and Ephriam Clark.
- 35th Chose Nicholas Hanson, Pound Keeper.
- 36th Chose Joseph Woodward, Abel Chase, James Chase, Andrew Carpenter, Capt. John Hill, Tristram Hooper, Capt. Calvin Warren, Samuel Scribner, Thomas Hanson, James Smith, Stephen Knight, Noah Robinson, Benjamin T. Hall, Hiram Chadbourne, John Walker, Jr., William Swett, Isaac Caton, Capt. Samuel Carle, Samuel Brooks, Jacob Maddox, George Thompson, John Stevens, Benjamin Page, Haywards and fence viewers.
- 37th Chose Eliot R. Bowdoin, Benjamin T. Hall, Nathaniel Burnham, Samuel Webber, Samuel Gogins, Andrew Roberts, Samuel Scribner, Surveyors of Lumber.
- 38th Voted for each school district to choose their own agent.
- 39th Voted to choose a committee to consist of three to examine all town accounts the present year.
- 40th Chose Elder Henry Hobbs, William Dearing, Jr., Esq., and Nathaniel Knight for said committee.
- 41st Voted to reconsider the vote passed to choose William Dearing, Jr. for one of the above committee.
- 42nd Chose Jonathan Dearing for one of the committee to examine town accounts.
- 43rd Voted for Elder Hobbs, Jonathan Knight, and Ivory Allen to have gates across the road the present year.
- 44th Voted to dissolve this meeting.