

Chatham Times

Past and Present

Tour of Old Mill Sites & Chatham Woods Camp by Jeanne Eastman

On October 15th, about thirty people gathered to learn about the mills that have operated along Mill Brook, between Upper and Lower Kimball Ponds and about Chatham Woods Camp, a camp for girls that operated from 1910 to 1954. Although we learned about the camp first, the mills were first in chronological history.

The Ames Mill, closest to Lower Kimball Pond, was started in 1778 by Nathaniel Ames of Fryeburg, Maine. This was a grist and up-and-down saw mill, originally providing meal and lumber for the benefit of Fryeburg. This mill operated until at least 1834.

In 1935, Dr. Howland built a small hydroelectric power plant at this site, providing electricity for his house until an electric power line was extended along the main road of Chatham in 1938.

Next upstream was the Carding Mill, which was operated from 1810 to 1910 by Jonah Hill, followed by his son, Jonah Hill Jr., and then his grandson, Dana Hill. In her booklet, *South Chatham and the Homefolks*, Margery L. Shirley (granddaughter of Dana Hill) tells her memories of the mill. The great granite stonework on each side of the brook is all that remains today. There is also a small stone and brick platform, the remains of a brick arch where a fire heated a huge iron kettle of water for washing and dyeing the wool. Local women spun and then knit or wove the wool. Denise Stanford remembered talking with an “old-timer” years ago who said that cloth for Civil War uniforms was made here - for armies on both sides!

At the third mill site, awesome stonework remains where the mill sat and along the stream where a dam held back a small mill pond. A photo from Sheryl Emery (granddaughter of Perley Head) shows a wooden flume which directed water to

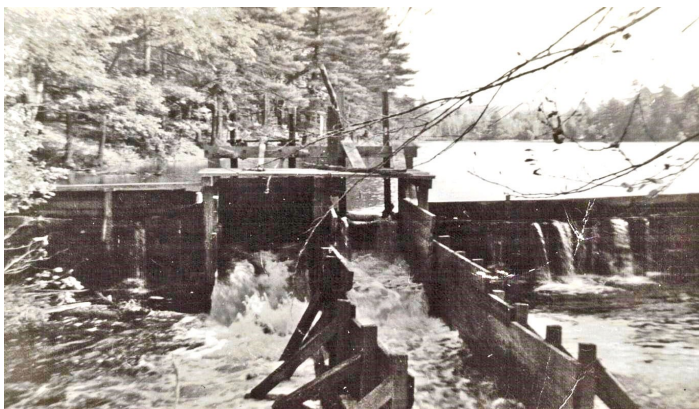


Dana Hill at his Carding Mill

the waterwheel. It's location is not labeled, but is likely at the outlet of Upper Kimball Pond where water flowed down past the mills. Steve Eastman, who has experience working at a water-powered mill, explained how the power of the water flowing over or under the waterwheel is transferred by belts, pulleys, levers, and gears to power a saw or turn millstones for grinding grain.

Besides the local post offices in each section of town, the mills were places where residents could find out the news. Notices of Town Meetings, and probably other important events, were posted at the mills.

The 1840 census was the peak of Chatham's population at 523. Families started moving west where the soil was not so rocky and hard to farm. The mills closed down.



Wooden Dam with Flume from Perley Head's Album

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Notes from the President

Congratulations to the raffle winners at our September Town Picnic, and a huge thank you to those who donated the prizes and to all who bought tickets. Jo Radner won the \$25 gift card from Stow Corner Store. Bob Katz won the afghan crocheted by Ellie Waterman. Craig McGee won the Shell Pond painting by Ann Landers. Sue Crowley won the 2-nights at Hikers Haven, donated by Barry and Helen Hollis.

In November we held another fund raiser – an online auction. The following people and businesses donated items: Diane Scott, Lori Steere, Alan Eastman, Alina Eastman, John Rondeau, Lisa Rondeau, Louise Perry, Chris Lewey, Becky Knowles, Paul & Ann Loscocco, Rachel & Ken Portanova, Beverly Aiman, Rich Fargo, Ann Fargo, Nate & Kate Hutchins, Maria Palmisano, Michelle Luongo, David Crouse, Pam Katz, Jeanne Eastman, Brenna Schneider, Susie Eastman, Sue Crowley, Gwen Reiss, Jane Nesbitt, Carolyn Brown, Lisa Moore, Russell Record, Western Maine Timberlands, NAPA, Weston's Farm, Sherman's Farm, Fly Away Farm, Jackson X-C Ski Touring, 302 West, Stow Corner Store, Fair Grounds, AMC Cold River Camp, Lisa Lewis, Cheryl Collins, Judy Bailey, George Perry, Doug Beaton, White Birch Books, Joe Shaw, Sheryl Emery, Boost Barn, Kim & Patrick Callen, Diana's Bags, Cold River Property Services. It was a fabulous array of items, something for everyone – art, food, experiences, services, tools. A huge thank you to the donors, to all who made bids, and congratulations to the high bidders. Also we couldn't have done it without the team that put it all together: Cassie Cox, Alina Eastman, Jeanne Eastman, Sue Crowley, Susie Eastman, and Beverly Aiman. We raised over \$3300. In anticipation of a next auction, we are gathering ideas and possibilities.

We have had busy Tuesday morning “Open Hours”, with people stopping in at our schoolhouse and members working on exhibits, events, and building projects.

Welcome to our new members, Paul Lusky, Jeff Patch, Brenna Schneider, and Elaine Schneider.

At our Veterans Memorial we have added two new pavers to remember soldiers of America's War for Independence, Jacob Danforth and William Cox. Our July speaker, Dan Kinley of the Fifth Connecticut Regiment of re-enactors, pointed out that after the soldiers learned on July 9th, 1776 that a Declaration of Independence had been signed, they were fighting a whole new war with greater consequences: rather than a revolt against the British laws, this was now America's War for Independence.

At our Veterans Day event, we learned that Scott Aiman was in the 3202 Civil Engineering Squadron at Elgin AFB, 1990-94, and was responsible for Rapid Runway Repair and setting up complete air bases within 24 hours. Bob Crowley served in the Navy, 1956-58, as an electrician on the aircraft carrier, USS Valley Forge CVS45. Steve Eastman served in the Navy, 1967-68 on the destroyer tender, USS Grand Canyon AD-28. We'd like to know more about the service of our veterans.

We'd also love to hear what you are learning about Chatham's history – even little things we can add to the Peddler's Pack. I'd like to do an article soon about Chatham post offices. Please tell us your experiences, or memories that you have heard others relate. If you are not getting updates between newsletters, it is because we don't have your address. Please send us information at chathamnhhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Happy and safe holidays! Stay warm!

Jeanne Eastman

Donations

Jan Levesque & Denise Stanford – morning, noon, and evening “Grace” posters from Chatham Woods Camp; **Gwen Reiss** – copies of The Winter Lodge, a children's book about the mice at Chatham Woods Camp; **Cindy Priest** – an early Ann Carrie Bradley painting of the “Charles' House”; **Gail Graves** – vital records; **Emily Fernald** – a chair that had belonged to the Eagle Grange, made by Conway Chair Company; **Sheryl Emery** – photos from Perley and Amy Head's album to scan.



Erlon Jones prepares the bean hole where he cooks the baked beans for the Town Picnic



Paul Reiss presented Denise Stanford with the WWII backpack that belonged to her father, Horace Miner (story on page 5)

The Peddler's Pack

A bundle of news from the neighbors over the years

From **Jonah Hill's** 1872 diary: Dec 24 Fair and clear but wind blows a gale and snow flies in clouds. Ther. at eleven A.M. only 4 deg above zero in the sun. The coldest, most uncomfortable day of the season. No teams in the woods.

This year **Bonnie Garland** released 132 Monarch butterflies that she had collected as caterpillars from the back field. The most she'd previously raised and released was 86 in 2021. The last Monarch was seen October 17, hurrying to catch up with the rest headed to Mexico.

A few years ago, when the roof on **Steve and Jeanne Eastman's** house (built in 1854 by Steve's great grandfather, Jacob Eastman) was being repaired, a baby's shoe was found between the walls. A Halloween NPR program on superstitions mentioned shoes found in house walls. This explanation was found online: the theory favored by most scholars argues that the shoes were concealed to protect against evil influences such as demons, ghosts, witches, and familiars. Witches were believed to be attracted by the human scent of a shoe, and after entering one, they found themselves trapped, as they were unable to reverse.

From **Maryann Eastman**: Whenever Loren Andrews would stop in, he'd rock back on the heels of his green rubber boots and begin, "Have I ever told you about the time....."

On October 23, **Pat Williams** of Lovell, was pressing cider with the cider press that Will Bryant had operated in the 1930s and '40s at Deep Meadow Farm at Chatham Center. In 1995 Al Wright sold the dilapidated press to Pat. The gears and pulleys were still good, but all the wooden parts had to be replaced.

A story told to **Cindy Priest** by her father, Dean R. Charles, one of eleven children who grew up in the 1930s in a small cabin between the Charles Brook and their grandparents' brick house in North Chatham: "We were not old enough to be allowed to carry a gun to help get food for the family. But we'd go back to the apple orchard. We'd drop out of the trees onto the deer and wrestle the deer while the younger ones would run home to get Dad to come with the gun."

George Perry remembers in the late 1950s and early '60s playing basketball with his siblings and the Wilfong boys in the old Grange Hall upstairs in the Wilfongs' house (at 1850 Main Road, where the Dorners now live) in North Chatham.

George Fernald told of a young McIntyre boy who worked for the Boston Cooking School in South Chatham. His job was to shoo the flies away from the cakes that were being photographed for their magazine. His pay: a piece of cake.

Estrid Eklof remembers that all were welcome to drop in unannounced at four o'clock on a summer afternoon to join Henry and Dorothy Wardwell at Baldface Farm for chatting and refreshments. Henry had a parrot that sat on his shoulder and shared his drink with him.

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Business meetings April – October, 3rd Tuesday, 6:30
PM

Open Hours: Tuesdays 9-Noon
We look forward to seeing you!

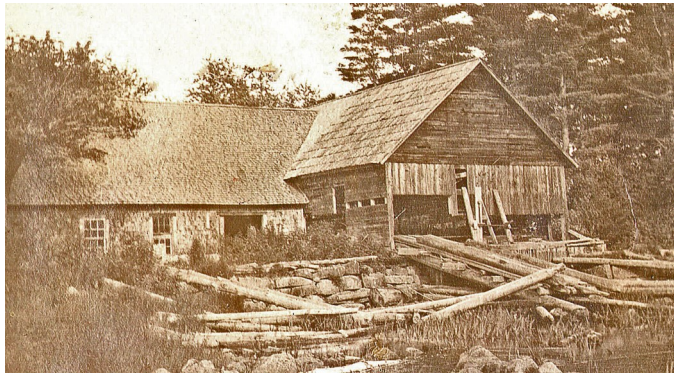


Pat Williams
operates the
cider press from
Will Bryant's
Farm

Upcoming Events

December 18 – 6 PM Potluck Supper at our Schoolhouse,
followed at 7 PM by Carols & Candles at the Chatham
Church

Feb 4 – Bonfire at Chatham Historical Society
March Maple Weekend at Nate and Kate's Maple, South
Chatham



Saw mill on Mill Brook, South Chatham

Chatham almost became a “forgotten place.”

BUT.... in 1903, Janet McKenzie Hill (sister-in-law to Dana Hill) started a cooking school in South Chatham, The Boston Cooking School at Topo Pino. Katherine “Kit” Bishop, from Bridgeport, Connecticut was one of the first students. She fell in love with Chatham and its people, returning each summer with her sister, Julie.

In 1909 Kit (29 years old) and Julie bought a piece of land between Upper Kimball Pond and Little Chatham Road. The former farms had all grown up to forests, and the young ladies started a summer camp for girls, called Chatham Woods Camp. The people of Chatham ad-

mired Kit Bishop, for not many women started businesses at that time. And most affluent families sent their young daughters to finishing school, rather than a remote camp in the woods.

Julie soon married Arthur Wood, the summer minister in North Conway. During the rest of the year, Arthur was a professor in Oregon and later at the University of Michigan. Kit managed the camp through two World Wars and the Great Depression, with many of the girls coming from her hometown area. The tents of the early years were eventually replaced with cabins. Besides enjoying swimming, canoeing, and rowing in their pond, these girls went on multiple-day canoeing expeditions and hikes, played tennis, and rode horses. Mel Cherry remembered helping his father maintain hiking trails between Chatham Woods Camp and Camp Ettowah (a boys camp) on the east side of Lower Kimball Pond, and the campers enjoyed inter-camp social events.

Denise Stanford first came to Chatham with her parents, pulling a boat over Hurricane Mountain in 1954. Her father, Horace Miner, had been invited by fellow professor, Arthur Wood. Denise spent time in one of the cabins right on the rocky shoreline. Thus began Denise's 66 years summering on Upper Kimball Pond, first with her parents in the hunting camp built by Dick Anderson’s uncle and then, with her husband, Jim, in a house they bought on the Pond.

Miss Bishop closed her camp after the 1954 season. The property served as a boys camp from 1960 to 1968. Paul Reiss, whose father, Albert J. Reiss, Jr., also taught alongside Mr. Miner, first visited Chatham in 1963 at the Miners' invitation. In 1969 his parents bought the Chatham Woods Property. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the Reiss family (Al and Emma and children Peter, Paul, and Amy) spent summers in Chatham. Al had grown up in Wisconsin and loved the Chatham weather. He started teaching at Yale around 1970, and they were based then in New Haven. Amy had her wedding on the dock in the late '90s. Paul eventually purchased the camp and is the current owner. For many years, Paul and family spent the first days at their summer home cleaning up after the mice who lived there in the winters. (Paul's wife, Gwen, has written a children's book, The Winter Lodge, illustrated by her brother, David North, about the life these mice enjoyed. She has donated copies of the book for us to sell from our schoolhouse.) The dining room, which had only low walls stretching between the kitchen and the lodge,



Steve Eastman explained how water-powered mills work



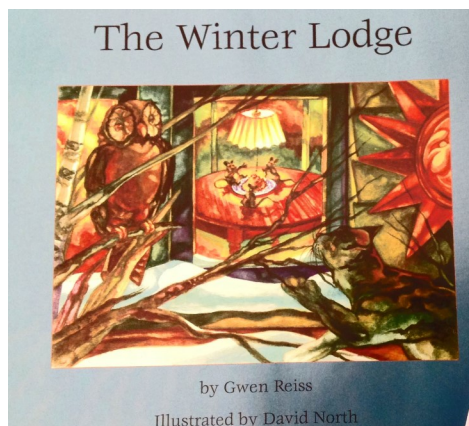
A painting by Charles Bishop. “view of Chatham Woods Camp from the dining porch, about 1916, before tents were replaced by bungalows. Dinner gong in the center.”

also held a ping pong table. After supper the bats, which by day slept hanging from the Army sectional flags overhead, flew into the night only to swish back in chasing the ping pong balls. Most of the many bunk beds that remained were sold to Harold Briggs who sold them in his weekly auctions.

The lodge building that remained was decrepit and too close to the Pond, according to the EPA, so was taken down. The boat house on the water was removed in the late '70s. Other cabins remain, but have not been maintained. Paul and Gwen have built a new cottage on the footprint of an old structure, and hope to rebuild some of the other cabins farther uphill from the shore.

As a boy, Paul spent time with Mr. Miner at his cabin, and one day Mr. Miner gave him his WWII backpack, identified in large black letters: Major Miner. During our tour, Paul, who had kept the backpack for 50 years, presented it back to Denise.

The Reisses had cabin signs, a painting of Camp by Kit's father, Charles Bishop, and other memorabilia for us to view. We were then welcomed down along the rocky path to the shore where the boathouse had been, to enjoy the spectacular view of Kearsarge, still arrayed in beautiful color, across the calm waters of Upper Kimball Pond and under the cloudless blue sky. What girl wouldn't have wanted to spend the summer at Chatham Woods Camp!

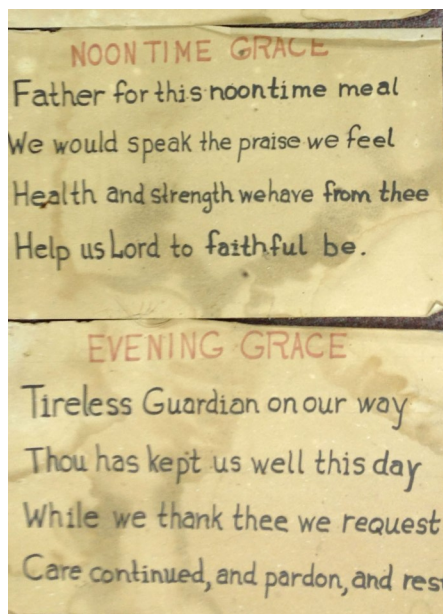


The Winter Lodge, a children's book written by Gwen (North) Reiss and illustrated by David North



At left - The totem pole at Chatham Woods Camp was made by Kit Bishop's father, Charles Bishop

At right - "Grace" posters hung in the dining room at Chatham Woods Camp



In Memory

Our deep sympathy to the families of these loved ones:

Ida Fernald Hutchins, 94; passed away September 26. Ida attended grammar school in South Chatham. She lived in East Conway and was a member of the Home Extension, the Grange, Keepers of the Hall, and the Fire Department. She worked at Stanley's Drive-In, Northland Shoe, and 25 years at Paris Farmers Union. Ida loved being with her family and gardening, picnicing, fishing, and camping.

Dorothy Lindblade, 80; passed away November 6. Stow. Dorothy for many years tended the floral gardens at the Red Jacket in North Conway, and raised, trained, and showed Golden Retrievers. She traveled to many of the world's attractions with her husband, Carl.

Leo Fournier, 91; passed away November 17. Stow. Leo was an avid outdoorsman. He traveled extensively with his wife, Babie Siklosi Fournier.

William Ela, 69; passed away November 22. Stow. Bill had a passion for tractors and machinery. He was an avid hunter, and loved horses and being in nature.

The following poem is from the “Cold River Budget, Number 1, Vol. 1st” which was presented December 25, 1887. Clearly this was part of a fun Christmas gathering of young families in North Chatham. They probably gathered at a schoolhouse, maybe by lamp light after the day's chores were done, warmed by the wood stove in the center. I imagine strong Chatham accents, and lots of laughter and blushing. Maybe there was a Christmas tree and cookies. Probably there was an occasional jingle from the harness bells on the blanketed horses hitched outside near the sleighs. We don't know who wrote or read this poem or the other articles in this volume of the “Cold River Budget.” We are keeping our eyes and ears open for more information about such social events and publications.

Ribble Rabble

In ancient times as we are told
By legends of those stories old
How every year Christmas came
In which was celebrated Christ's name.

So there once was a teacher and scholars gay
Who said to themselves on a certain day
That all their friends they would invite
To assemble with them on Christmas night.

From far and wide the people all
Should assemble at school-house or hall
And elect for committee a chosen few
Who they thought best the work to do.

So straight to Cretia quick word was sent
For without her time would be poorly spent.
Recitations and dialogues were soon disposed
And a Christmas paper was then proposed.

But to have a paper we all must write
Because for one it is quite a battle to fight.
So we will write a few lines to fill up a space
And perhaps bring a smile to somebody's face.

And now kind friends if you will forebear
And promise that you will not swear
We will relate with terrible fear
About the people who are gathered here.

In Cold River a place much famed
For its smart young men and pert little dames
And bachelors too and ladies fair
Who wear big bustles and band their hair.

We'll begin with Willie a gay young man
Who studies his books and does what he can
All kinds of work he did at Glen
And writes to the milk-maid now and then.

Then there is Robert a doomed old bach

And Chester who thinks with Miss Towle he can make a
match.

And many others whom we can't mention
Who would like to pay the schoolmarm more attention.

There is Lester we must not forget
Who lives a single life as yet
With all the interest he takes in the Thomas'es
Thinks as yet he can't give himself many promises.

Gus and his wife next come to mind
Over to Hod's on a visit had quite a time
As May told Hod to put on his new pants so as to look
neat.

But Alas! She had left a needle in the seat.

Then there is Mary and Micajah Fife
And John Charles and his jolly wife
With their son Fred and daughter to be
You surely know we mean Abbie C.

Next comes brother Wilbur so sober and steady
To study his books is always ready
To flirt with the girls is not his way
But no doubt he will have one for a wife some day.

There is Allie who goes to school and does the chores
And into the girls ears the love he pours
So you would think by all that is good and brown
He's mashed on all the girls in town.

What of friend Wesley we can't skip him
That young man so tall and slim
Who of late wears a fur cap
Flirts with the girls and the like of that.

Next comes brother Richard and do you think it would be
a sin

If we should speak of the pretty whiskers he wears on his
chin

Who has got for a wife a noted cook you all know
As she sends her wares to Boston to prove it so.

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Continued from page 6

Then there is Omer who mends our shoes
Makes our boots and gives us the news-
At his shop can't always be found
Especially when Annie Haley is in town.

There is Charlie Chandler the landlord of Willow Leaf
Who went in to tell his wife to drown his grief
For many a traveler he has taken in
And once in a while they had taken in him.

Now Dexter and Nancy we won't leave you out
For if we do you might get mad and pout
And their son Leon who's hair is so curly
Says he shall try and cut out Perley.

Then there is another we will describe
And he belongs to the Bracket tribe.
In many features can't be beat
And on Maria is getting sweet.

Last but not least in this ribble rabble
Is Mark who over Peter's way likes to travel
And Lin thinks of no other way to break up the clan
Than to send his name to the Lodge as soon as he can.

Now at writing for a paper you will see we were green
But if we had not tried you would we were mean.
I must have tried your patience to hear this nonsense
through
So we will wish you one and all Adieu.

Editor's note: With David Crouse's help we have been able to identify some of the names in this poem.

Cretia is probably Lucretia Pitman (age 24), sister of Georgia who married Charles Chandler. Lucretia married Wellington Chandler in 1888.

Willie, is possibly William P. Chandler (age 18), a son of Horace & Mary and a school teacher in Sweden, ME in 1890; or Willie Clinton Charles (age 24), son of Dean & Esther (Eastman) Charles.

Robert Eastman (age 33) never married. He was living with his widowed sister, Jannett Osgood, at the brick house now owned by the Pitmans.

Chester Eastman (age 22) married the school teacher, *Sarah Towle* (age 23) in 1889 and lived at the brick house now owned by his grandson, Steve Eastman.

Gus is possibly James Augustus Brickett (age 37) and lived next door to Horace Chandler, or Ira Augustus "Gus" Andrews (age 24) who lived at the Stone House.

Hod and *May* are probably Horace Chandler (age 48) and wife Mary (age 37), who lived at the house that was later expanded to take in guests and known as the Royce House.

Mary and *Micajah Fife* (both age 47) lived at the brick house now owned by the Wilshusen family.

John Charles (age 48) and his family lived where the Dorners now live. In 1887, his son *Fred* was 13 years old and did not end up marrying *Abbie C.*

Wesley is probably Wesley Webster Chandler (age 17), son of Horace and Mary Chandler.

Brother Richard is probably Richard Chandler (age 36), married to Annette Stevens. They lived where Richard Eastman now lives.

Omer is Madison Omer Charles (age 28) who was still a bachelor in 1887, living in the brick house that is now owned by his grandson, Richard Charles. He married Lillian Charles in 1893.

Charlie Chandler (age 29) and his wife, Georgia (age 28), owned what was later called the Chandler Farm and ran an inn.

Dexter (age 39) and his wife, *Nancy* (age 35) & their son *Leon* (age 21) lived where the Portanova family now lives. *Perley* may be Perley Chandler (age 12), son of George and Alice Chandler, living at "Baldface Farm."

Mark is probably Mark Charles (age 14), son of Dexter & Nancy Charles. *Peter* is probably Rodney Peter Charles (age 11), son of Peter and Sarah Charles who lived where Nadia Peterson now lives, just south of Summit Achievement on Deer Hill Road. *Lin* may be John Lindsey Chandler (age 15), son of Horace & Mary.

No guesses can be made as to the identities of Lester, the Thomases, Abbie C., Brother Wilbur, Allie, the Bracket boy, and Maria.



Harold and Winnie Andrews bringing home their Christmas tree, 1984.

Chatham Historical Society
1061 Main Road
Chatham, NH 03813

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