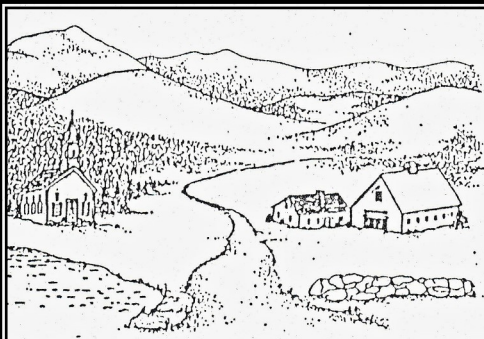




Chatham Times

Past and Present

Anna and Henrietta Chandler

by Jeanne Eastman

When I visited with Roberta Chandler over the past couple of years, we'd chat about all things North Chatham. I am so glad I recorded one such chat featuring Roberta's mother-in-law, Anna (Charles) Chandler, and Anna's mother-in-law, Henrietta (Brickett) Chandler. This article is based on that visit.

Henrietta "Etta" (1879-1963) was about eleven when she came to Chatham to live with her uncle, James Augustus "Gus" Brickett and help care for his ailing wife, Etta's aunt, Henrietta. They lived in the house beside the Chandlers where John Lindsey "Lin" was helping on his father, Horace's, farm. Horace Chandler, after he had returned home from serving in the Civil War, had bought the farm, with its little frame cottage, from a Wyman. Etta and Lin were married in 1897.

Roberta got to know the Chandlers in 1959, at which time her new husband, John Royce Chandler's, grandmother, Etta, was still very much in charge. She remembers Etta knitting to keep her arthritic hands from seizing up. She'd buy afghan kits, and make colorfully striped socks with the left-over yarn.

Roberta described Etta as a woman "way ahead of her time." She was entrepreneurial, and fixed the farm up, including having a concrete



Henrietta "Etta" (Brickett) Chandler



Lillian Anna (Charles) Chandler

floor put in the barn. It was around 1910 that they started taking boarders at the house, and the old house was rebuilt as the "Royce House," with ten rooms for guests. Etta was involved in the Conway Insurance Agency, and she was for a time President of The Cold River Telephone Company. She and her brother-in-law, Zach Chandler, were the maintenance crew for the phone company; she'd drive along and Zach would climb the poles to make repairs. Etta also managed the food operations at the AMC Cold River Camp that started in 1919. She hired the kitchen help for them, and probably supplied them with food from their farm.

Etta was also a member of the Chatham Congregational Church, a 60-year member of the Eagle Grange in North Chatham, the town postmaster for many years, and chairman of the Chatham branch of the American Red Cross. (from her obituary)

Etta's and Lin's son, Millard, married Lillian Anna Charles (1909-2006) who grew up just two doors down. "Anna" as she was always known, was the 8th of 9 children of Madison Omer and Lillian Charles. Both Millard and Anna attended the North Chatham

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Notes from the President

Thanks to the Special Collections Department of the University of Maine at Orono for scanning more than eighty-five documents from Rice W. Guptill for us. Rice moved to Chatham Center soon after 1840. He was a blacksmith and also served as Chatham Town Clerk and a Justice of the Peace. These papers include deeds, legal documents, personal letters, and sales receipts. I have been downloading the documents to our computer and will print them to have at our museum.

I have also been working on a display of the history of the older houses in Chatham. Many, many thanks to David Crouse for his help with this research!

Tim Ryan has helped us try to keep the flying squirrels out of our building. This may be an ongoing project. Our neighbor, the Congregational Church, just last summer repaired the steeple where the squirrels had made holes, and the squirrels have simply chewed new holes.

We have had three requests for information: one member wanting the history of Chester Eastman's ancestors in Chatham, one person trying to trace his ancestry back past Ira B. Johnson who settled in North Chatham in 1837, and the new owners of the former North Chatham schoolhouse wanting the history of the building to share with their AirBnB guests.

We have started a new community outreach, giving Welcome Bags to new Chatham residents. These bags include a CHS newsletter, an offer of a one-year gift membership in the CHS, helpful information about the Town Office, schools, the transfer station, and local libraries and churches, and a half-pint of local maple syrup. Thank you to Sue Crowley and Alina Gagne for working on this project.

Welcome to our new members: Steve Murphy, Caitlin Crowe, and Stephen Carvalho.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this newsletter and helped in other ways too. Alan Eastman, thank you for plowing our driveway, and right to our door! Steve Eastman, thank you for repairing the door to our Little Library, which was caught and broken in the wind. John Rondeau, thanks for transforming the mystery negatives into digital photos. We hope someone will be able to identify the people or the hills.

We have several ideas and are working on programs for this summer. We will start with a presence at Maple Weekend, March 26 and 27. You can get your maple syrup from our members at Nate and Kate's in South Chatham, Notch View Farm in North Chatham, or at the Chester Eastman Homestead in North Chatham on this weekend and at any time during the year. We will keep you posted as other programs are scheduled.

I'd like to collect some of your memories of apples in Chatham over the years. Did your family have a special heritage tree, or an orchard? Any family traditions or recipes involving apples? Please send us any information. Thank you!

Jeanne Eastman



Mystery Photo

Anyone recognize the people or location of this photo?

schoolhouse just across the road. Millard had attended Fryeburg Academy, boarding in town with the Seavey's, until his father died and he needed to tend the farm. Anna did not have the privilege of attending high school. But after she had completed the 8th grade, Lucretia Chandler taught her algebra and literature, the equivalent of two years of high school. Then she worked in Fryeburg doing chamber work for Mrs. Page at Ye Olde Inn, and as a mother's helper. After their marriage in 1931, Anna helped her mother-in-law with the boarding house. Etta, Anna, and Millard's sister, Evelyn, did all the cooking and cleaning themselves.

In 1958, the Chandlers stopped taking boarders. Roberta thinks that it was too much work for them, and "the times" had changed. People were more interested in staying in a motel in town with a swimming pool and a television. But still, Etta and Anna kept a clean house, ready for any family or friends who would drop in for a meal and the night. Anna never knew how many people would be at Sunday dinner, but she was always prepared.

Millard was milking seven or eight cows at that time. Anna would mark on the calendar how many pounds of butter she made and any other accomplishments of each day. The calendar/diaries were not saved for posterity; it was just useful information for her. Milk was sold at the house. Folks out for a ride through Evan's Notch would stop for milk, butter, buttermilk, or cottage cheese. In berry season there was a steady stream of customers for cream. People would buy cream for making ice cream. Anna also sold bread and other baked goods. And there was always a milkpan of popcorn in the warming oven on the stove. People stopping in were in the habit of getting a handful. Uncle Sim (Simeon Charles), Anna's brother, sold the best popcorn at his store at Stow Corner.

Roberta remembered that Anna worked very hard her whole life. She loved to cook. She could sew and won prizes at the Grange with her creations. She was a member of the Library Club, the Christmas Club called "The Northern Whigs," and the Chatham Historical Society. In 1980 Anna and Millard sold the Royce House and moved to Lovell near their son, John, and Roberta.

Anna's Butter

"Anna set the cream out overnight to warm up (62 degrees is the goal). She used to have a huge wooden barrel churn, but then she had a Hobart, which is like a Kitchen Aid. We'd put a wet dishtowel over the top to keep the butter from splashing out. Once we had butter, the buttermilk was drained off and saved for cooking, and some people like to drink it. Then we'd run a lot of cold water through the butter until the water was absolutely clear. We'd squish and flop it with our hands. Then we'd work in some salt and put it in the one-pound, or half-pound wooden molds and use the paddles to smooth the top. We wrapped it in butter paper that we got from Osgood's. We'd soak the paper while we were working, and it would wrap into a neat parcel. Once the paper dried, it would stay nice."

Anna's Cottage Cheese

"We'd put (unpasteurized) skim milk in a pan on the back of the stove where it was warm. After it clabbered (in two or three days, depending on how warm it was) we stirred boiling water into it, and it would turn into little granules of cheese. We'd strain it in an enamel colander and add a little salt. If it was too dry, we'd add a tablespoon of cream." (Editor's note: I tried this recipe. It is so easy, and so flavorful! You need unpasteurized milk so that it sours properly.)

To the right is a post card of the Royce House. On the back the inscription reads: "To Mrs. Almond Emerson, 35 Amount St., Medford, Mass. Nov. 8, 1915 Dear Mrs. Almond Emerson, I do hope my little message will be just as acceptable if it is rather late, we have 17 boarders so are quite busy. Love & best wishes, from Etta S. Chandler



Rainbow Lodge

David and Jane MacKenzie, who owned Rainbow Lodge from 1985 to 2021, shared with us photographs, letters, and newspaper articles pertaining to Rainbow Lodge which was built by Sgt. Charles and Helen (Latham) Comstock in 1927. Sergeant Comstock got his non-commissioned title from being "Top Sergeant" in Ohio Cavalry, "The Black Horse Troup" in the 1870's, and for half a century, he made parquetry flooring at his factory in Indianapolis. Mrs. Comstock was a music teacher in the Horace Mann school in New York City.

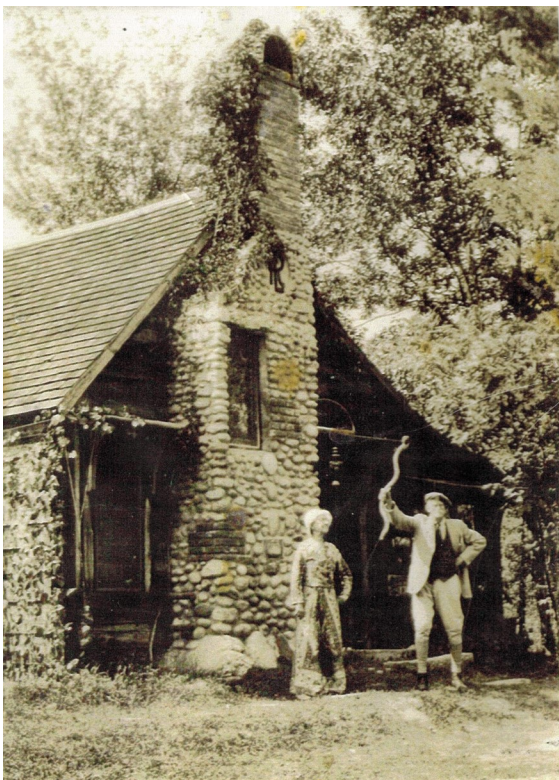
In 1837 Edward Webb constructed the first building on this site beside the dam at what was then called Webb Pond. Austin Drury built the main building in 1876. Both Webb and Drury operated a saw mill on the brook between what are now called Upper Kimball and Lower Kimball Ponds. Frances Hill was born here, but it is unclear whether this is where her parents lived. A Pickering lived here 1898 to 1903. The building was the office of Dr. Day's boys camp which he ran from 1916 to 1922. The Comstocks bought the property in 1925 from Lora and Robert Kennett. At that time, the roof shingles were gone from the building and the plaster was fallen, but otherwise it was in fair condition. The building (which the Comstocks called The Hermitage) was fixed up before being moved by Perley Head with his three teams of horses, to a site ¼ mile north.

At the old George Hill place across from the Osborne Anderson farm, an old barn built in 1842 was dismantled and the timbers used to build the new house, which was called Rainbow Lodge, at the dam. The Lodge was built in 28 days, with the chimney built in eight hours the following day.

Mr. and Mrs. Comstock operated a gift shop at Rainbow Lodge with choice selections of handicrafts: etchings in silver, pewter, and copper; wood carvings; India prints; and handiwork. Their advertisements promised "good roads," and "three miles from a grocery, nine miles from the rail-road, 14 miles to a shoe-shine."

The property then passed to William and Margaret Garretson in 1956, to Julius P. Winfield in 1971, to David MacKenzie in 1985, and to Jacob and Maureen Ringler in 2021.

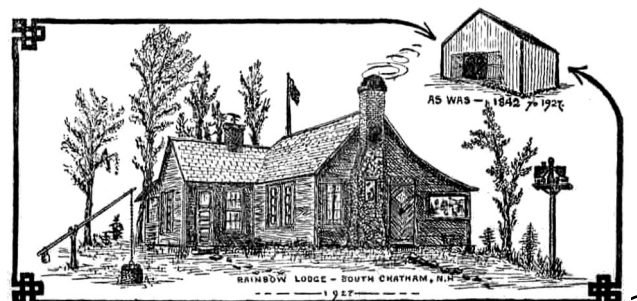
Below—the Hermitage was moved by
Perley Head's horses a quarter mile north



Left— Charles and Helen Comstock at Rainbow Lodge



Below—Rainbow Lodge 1927



Reprinted from *The Reporter*, North Conway, NH, Sept 21, 1939

Rainbow Lodge

by Frank S. Somerby, New York City

How often during the warm summer days, and especially when the leaves are turning in the fall, have you longed for a camp in the mountains, near a brook or little lake as Van Dyke wrote of! Your imagination, an elementary knowledge of a few tools, a small investment and your dream could be so easily realized.

During a recent trip to the White Mountains I saw one of the most unique and attractive summer homes to be found in all New England and it was built at a cost unbelievably small. The owner, having found a beautiful location on the outlet brook between the two Kimball Lakes, in Carroll County, New Hampshire, far from the madding crowd and yet but ten miles from a city, bought a dilapidated century-old barn. Torn down in three days the sound timbers and boards were sorted and delivered to the new location. In 27 more days the cabin was complete. It was necessary to buy but little new lumber for inside partitions and trim, including doors and windows. This was all stained brown to give it an aged appearance. The outside weathered boards were lapped three inches like siding, the chimney and foundation being constructed of field stones found nearby.

Set within the chimney is a beautiful leaded-glass window with the design of an owl sitting on a tree by moonlight, and in the evening when the cabin is illuminated from within, it presents a cheerful appearance to every passerby. Much of the furniture has been made by the owner who used heart of cypress lumber which lends itself to the use of a torch and wire brush for aging the wood, this being called the Togo process. On the chairs and elsewhere are carved more than a score of owls, the motif used throughout.

Above the fire place is carved a Welsh motto from the owner's heraldic design – NID CYFOETH OND BONDLONER. Translated it means: "Not wealth but contentment." Glass prisms in windows catch the sunshine and reflect the beautiful colors from which the house derives its name, "Rainbow Lodge." A long screened porch on the west faces the lake, but twenty feet away. The north end of the dining room has a tall Gothic window extending to the ridge. There are no ceilings. Spruce beams, hand-hewn over a century ago, are in evidence everywhere, the roof joist giving the effect of curved beams. This was done to gain the curved roof over the porch. A port hole from an old wrecked ship forms a window at one end of the room next to the porch.

Outside, under the trees, is a tall stone fireplace for picnics, made of the native field stones with tunnels running through from all sides to a storage space in the rear, where grain is deposited for the chipmunks. Imbedded in the structure, at the mantle shelf line, are specimens of marble from the ancient Parthenon in Greece and a bit of pavement from old Carthage, both souvenirs over 2000 years old. The owner has carved from the rock at the top, the Great Stone Face, Jack Spratt and his wife, in stone, facing each other across the fire opening, the Hand-o-Durga, an India talisman, and other figures known to history or fable. Further observation brings to view various specimens of minerals picked up here and there in this country and abroad.

Covering the house on two sides are enormous morning glories known as "heavenly blues." One might search far to find a summer cottage more charming than "Rainbow Lodge." It is near Conway, New Hampshire. When next you are touring the White Mountains, look for it. It will open your eyes to see how beautiful and livable a summer home can be made from an old barn. Sergeant and Mrs. Comstock are friendly people who delight in greeting visitors.

In Memory

Our sympathy to the families of these loved ones:

Leo Fecteau, 67; passed away January 11. Leo was a veteran of the US Marines and ran a family farm at "Narrow Path Farm" in Chatham for more than ten years.

Rita Marie Loscocco, 95; passed away January 23. Rita Marie was a school teacher for many years in Holliston and Framingham, MA. She was blessed to spend her last years with her son and daughter-in-law in Chatham.

Olin Lusky, 80; passed away January 24. Olin was born and grew up in Chatham, and as an adult lived in nearby towns. He enjoyed farming, gardening, and served our towns in many ways. He was a great source of historical information on Chatham.

Roberta (Cram) Chandler, 85; passed away January 26. Roberta was a long-time Life Member of our Chatham Historical Society. She was very active in the Lovell Historical Society and town matters. Over the past few years she has shared many of Millard Chandler's (her father-in-law) diaries with us.

Harold Briggs' Auction Barn

Thanks to those who have shared memories of Harold Briggs' Auction Barn in South Chatham.

From Ron Briggs:

I recall the auctions in Chatham as a part of my growing up. My dad would buy the contents of houses when people were moving or had passed away. He would hire a truck (at first a logging truck from Dickie Graves, and later a box truck from Hermie Johnson) to move the goods to the auction barn, which was in our back yard. He "hired" my brother Bill & me to "help" in this process when we were around 5 years old. During the Saturday night auction our yard would fill up with cars and the barn would fill up with people. When it first started Bill and I would be the "runners" and bring items to the high bidders. Dad would have lined up all the sale items before the sale and sometimes I would be the "feeder," who would bring the items to him. Many times I would get distracted studying those items, and I would hear him saying "Ronnie, bring that over here so I can sell it!" and then hear the crowd laughing. We had a man come to sing and play a guitar sometimes for intermission. As the auction grew, older local boys were hired to help. The popularity of the event outgrew the barn, and a bigger building was built across the street with more room for parking. My mom set up a refreshment stand, and the "Bargain Basement" was opened downstairs, where new items were sold. Somewhere along the line a retired moving truck was purchased (a GMC 20' box truck). Bill would drive the truck, including up through Evans Notch to retrieve TVs and other things from Top Furniture in Gorham. He was only 13 at the time, but was much better at driving the truck than my dad was! We had several specialty auctions over time, including antique and gun auctions, which were always exciting. During the week the building was used for Roller Skating, and had a local group playing live music some nights. I remember that some of the skaters had enlisted or been drafted and would be going off to a place called Viet Nam. As far as I know they all returned. I still have people tell me that they used to come to our auctions.

I am not sure when the auctions started, but I was very young. Maybe 1960 or so. The barn became a new furniture store after the new auction hall was built around 1964 or 1965. By the late 1970's it became difficult to find merchandise, as flea markets and yard sales were starting up and there was more of a market for goods from estates. That's really why the auctions ended. My father sold the property that became Kimball Lake Shores to Doug Forbes, but held onto the auction hall for a short time before selling that to Doug Forbes also.

From Lucy D'Agostino Crowe:

My family looked forward to Saturday summer evenings all week when we would pile into our big green station wagon and drive a mile to Briggs' Auction Barn. As we traveled down the windy road, my nine year old excitement would build. What treasures would my father bid on tonight?

Once inside, we heard Mr. Harold Briggs' quick-paced, auctioneer language roll off his tongue, while sons Ron and Bill held up items in front of the crowd. Once the bidding had stopped, Ron or Bill carefully delivered each item to its new owner. Larger items were put aside to be hoisted into waiting



Harold Briggs

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pick-up trucks and station wagons.

Although this was all serious business, the Briggs family kept it light and fun. Mr. Briggs would intersperse his bidding streams with jokes. The warm, summer evenings were always social, neighbor to neighbor, and full of laughter and good cheer.

Over time, my father ended up with a home full of treasures from Briggs' Auction Barn. Today, fifty five years later, we are lucky to still enjoy the deep and comfortable arm chairs, the sturdy, tightly woven wicker rocker, and the gold rimmed floral tea cups, among other treasures.

But the best treasure of all, once the snow melts and we open the Carriage House doors, is knowing lifelong friends Ron and Bill will come up the driveway for neighborly visits. As we sit in the airy room to catch up, Ron and Bill look the same as they did all those years ago, and the atmosphere, filled with Briggs' Auction Barn treasures, is just right!

From David Crouse:

I went to auctions at Harold Briggs's Auction Barn several times with Lyndon Emerson of Stow, who was working for Harold as a "runner" at the Saturday evening auctions. I was high bidder on a few things, one of which is a antique mantel clock I still have. I believe I paid the low price of a dollar or two for the clock. That was 1961, and the clock still works.

From Orman McAllister, Jr.:

When I went to Fryeburg Academy, I'd ride to school with Mr. Briggs, who taught Drivers' Ed. And he'd get me out of school to go around with Herm Johnson in a logging truck, picking up things, usually furniture, for the auction. Sometimes Alan Fox would help us with his father's truck.

From Steve Eastman:

I bought a few things from the auctions. One was a brand-new, queen-sized box spring and mattress set. I think Mr. Briggs would get new furniture from places that had surplus or discontinued stock. Another item was a tiny, antique pot-bellied wood stove. My parents were with me one particular night, and my father knew that I wanted that stove but didn't have much money. The bidding came down to me and one other person. I had about reached my limit and was hesitating to nod my head the next time Mr. Briggs looked at me, but my father, who was sitting on the other side of my mother from me and had his arm around the back of her chair, gently tapped me on the shoulder. I took that to mean I should keep bidding, so I nodded again. Every time the other guy bid, Mr. Briggs would look back at me, my father would tap me on the shoulder to let me know I should bid higher, and it went back and forth like that with Dad tapping my shoulder, until I got the stove for \$25. My father paid it as an early Christmas present for me.

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We are happy to help you!

Donations

Elwyn Wheaton – a large framed map of Chatham 1891, in memory of his grandmother, Mildred Andrews, the last teacher in our Chatham Center One-Room Schoolhouse.

Louise Perry – the framing for a Chatham Woods Camp poster.

Monetary Donations—Large and small from many people. Each is much appreciated.

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