

# WATERVILLE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Number 2 OCTOBER 2019

Dear Fellow Historians,

We have much to report since our first quarterly Newsletter in July.

We were delighted to see many of you at the Annual Meeting of the Waterville Valley Historical Society on August 17. The meeting began with a presentation by member Jack Sanders entitled "The History of Freestyle Skiing: 'From Waterville Valley to the Olympics'". The presentation was well attended and enjoyed by all. A big thank you to Jack, and our local historians, Brenda and Preston Conklin, for all of the work involved in putting it together. The meeting included: Introduction of Officers, Approval of minutes from August 4, 2018 Membership Meeting, Treasurer's Report, Committee Updates, President's Report, Election of Officers, and Old Business. Minutes from the meeting have been emailed to members. Our By-Laws require election of Officers at each Annual Board Meeting, Election Results:

2019-2020 WVHS Board Members

President- Reggie Breeckner

Vice President-Susan Scrimshaw

Treasurer- Lori Horton

Secretary-Reva Gertel

Rob Wilson

Darrell Fernandes

Rich Rita

September 1 was a busy day for the Society. Brenda and Preston led a "Cellar Hole Hike" on Old Waterville Road. The weather was wonderful and our guides broke into two groups to accommodate the 37 hikers. The hike was thoroughly enjoyed by all... and if our guides are willing, will become an annual event.

Later in the day the Society hosted the 2nd Annual "Getting to Know the Valley" event in Town Square. There were 16 local organizations and clubs represented, and both residents and visitors were given the opportunity to find out what our Valley has to offer. The Square hummed with activity, and families, individuals and pets seemed to enjoy the nice weather. The Society had a table with Newsletters, membership applications, and an assortment of Valley artifacts. We had some great conversations and signed up 7 new members.

Looking forward:

We are working on scripts for historical walking tours in the Valley, as well as scripted trolley tours. With Winter arriving soon, this will probably become a reality in late Spring.

We are currently working on improving our Facebook presence, and creating a WVHS website, encouraged by your feedback at the August meeting. We are continuing to contribute to the Wigwag, with an article on the history of hiking Trail signs in the October issue.

We have also begun some very preliminary work on plans for our museum. Our museum would be located on the 1.08 acre parcel that is home to the WV Library. Our vision is for a building with a large, “fluid” museum display space with movable walls, giving us the flexibility to change exhibits. This concept would also provide us with proper storage for our historical documents and artifacts. Comments at the August meeting and the September Town Square event indicate that we should plan educational activities for children, and include artifacts in addition to photographs and written materials. Please do continue to give us ideas for your vision of a museum. We are working with an architect as well as the Selectmen and Town and hope to have a presentation for the March Town Meeting.

History Tidbit: For more than 100 years, hikers based in Waterville Valley kept logs of their hikes. These included participants, weather, comments on trail conditions, and sometimes drawings or maps. The most recent one continues to be maintained. These logs have been preserved as an important part of our history. Look for a future Wigwag article on the records of some of the early hikes.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact us at: [wvhistorybuffs@gmail.com](mailto:wvhistorybuffs@gmail.com) or Waterville Valley Historical Society, PO Box 13, Waterville Valley, NH 03215

For those of you who do not get the Waterville Valley Wigwag (recommended!) we received permission from the editors to reprint an article here which appeared in the October, 2019 issue.

### **Signs of the Past**

The August 2019 issue of the Wigwag had an article by Stacie Sullivan about the development of the trails in the region. It mentioned the role of Arthur Lewis Goodrich in creating and mapping many of those trails, along with his brother Charles. Later, his two sons Hubert and Nathaniel continued to build and maintain the trails. His great-grandson Nathaniel Lewis Scrimshaw now works with the World Trails network and also teaches trail work to the next generation in our White Mountains.

Generations of Waterville summer residents worked to maintain the trails every season. As they worked, they removed battered and faded trail signs and replaced them with new ones. The old trail signs contained many memories of hikes and adventures with friends and family, and were carefully preserved on the walls of the cottages which flanked the Waterville Inn.

The Goodrich Cottage in Waterville Valley still stands, the Stone Tower by its side, although the Goodrich descendants moved to the nearby Sandwich Mountain Farm in the 1980's. Hubert Goodrich was my grandfather, and I have memories of summer visits to the Valley, replete with many hikes on the trails surrounding this very special place. I loved the Goodrich Cottage, with its Victorian wallpaper, big cast-iron wood stove in the kitchen and hammocks on the porch. But most of all, I remember the signs. The walls of the old kitchen were a mosaic of old trail signs. Some were of familiar places: Tyler Spring, The Cascades, Greeley Ponds Trail, The Kettles, Elephant Rock. Others were more mysterious, like Swaseytown, which has faded into the forest. My favorite was said to have come from a spring and watering trough on the side of the road into the Valley from Campton. It read:

*Oh traveler, stay thy weary feet  
Drink of this fountain cool and sweet.  
It flows for rich and poor the same.  
Then go thy way, remembering still  
The wayside spring beneath the hill,  
The cup of water in His name.*

Today, Nordic ski trail signs and hiking trail signs compete for attention, with the latter sometimes losing out. I find myself telling confused hikers where trail signs used to be and trying to point them in the right direction. We have lost a part of our history with those signs, and it is encouraging that plans are underway to restore them.

The signs from the Goodrich Cottage are carefully preserved by Goodrich family descendants. They continue to tell stories of a magical place where people came to escape the city noise and heat, and to enjoy the woods that became our White Mountains National Forest.

*Susan C. Scrimshaw for The Waterville Valley Historical Society*

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