



THE WATERVILLE UNIT

Waterville vacationers in 1917 had much to be uncertain about. The future of the only hotel in town was shaky, following the death of its owner Carrie Elliott. Lumber companies were encroaching on more and more of the land in the valley.

Meanwhile, on a more distant horizon, the world was engaged in a devastating war.



A small collection of documents from the summer of 1917 records how a group of women guests at Elliott’s Hotel turned their attention to how they might help in this larger world crisis. They were determined to keep coming to the place that, by then, was commonly advertised as ‘the Happy Valley’, to hike and enjoy the clean mountain air. But this year, they also had another purpose. On June 1, before leaving for the season in Waterville, they met at the home of Miss Louise Peloubet of

Auburndale, MA to discuss how “work for the war effort might be done by the ladies at Waterville during the summer of 1917.” They addressed the immediate needs they would have for money (dues in the amount of 25 cents for working members or one dollar for honorary members, 35 dollars pledged on the spot and 35 dollars for wool, garments, and gauze). Knitted socks were especially needed. And they assigned to one of the members the task of “securing, if possible, the rental of a sewing machine for the summer’s work.” They concluded the meeting by giving themselves a name: The Waterville Unit for War Relief Work.

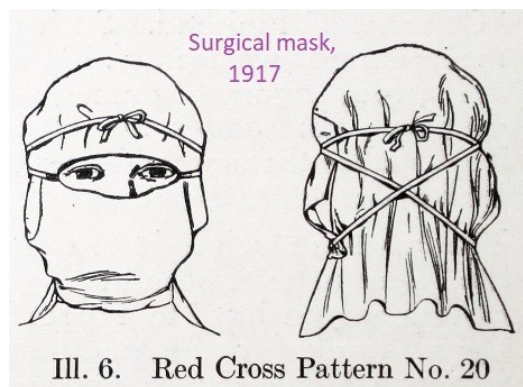
With this meeting, Louise Peloubet and other regular summer residents of the valley joined an international effort. A hand-written journal detailing their project, expenses, and correspondence attests to their work and the pride they must have taken in it. The Waterville Unit received a letter commending its members for the excellent quality of their labor. At the end of July, Edith Bangs, the chairman of the New England Branch of the American Fund for French Wounded, wrote a long letter to Mrs. Raven at Elliott’s



Hotel, declaring that the gauze dressings and masks that had been mailed were “so excellently well made that we have no criticism to make. Many thanks to you and your workers for the substantial help which this consignment means to us.” She added advice about how the women might use any cotton remnants to make floor cloths for additional donation.

The efforts of the Waterville Unit for War Relief Work, started in that difficult 1917 summer, helped link the ‘town at the end of the road’ to the world. It’s never easy to accurately measure the impact of such efforts, but the trace left by their carefully kept records makes it easier to imagine.

SOURCE: Waterville Valley Collection, Rauner Library, Dartmouth College.



ALL SALES WITH SERVICE
PRESENT THIS COUPON FOR 2% CASH OR CHECK DISCOUNT.

Plymouth Furniture Company, Inc.
SINCE 1923

OPEN: Mon. - Fri. (8am-5pm); Sat. (8am-2:59pm) www.plymouthfurnitureco.com

FLOORING
Ceramic Tile • Vinyl • Hardwood • Laminate • Carpet
Furniture • Appliances • Countertops
Custom Window Treatments

151 Main Street • Plymouth, NH 03264 • (603) 536-1625