

WATERVILLE VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Dear Fellow Historians,

A Very Happy New Year to all!

Winter has found our Board working on less creative and more laborious tasks.

Our current objective is to find a local home for all of our documents and collections. They are presently housed in two separate locations, Dartmouth College Library and the basement of our Town Hall. We would very much like to someday have a museum in Waterville Valley, but in the meantime, we need a space that will provide us with both easy access and a protected environment for our collections. All of the documents and collections need to be properly surveyed, cataloged and preserved. Two separate locations make this task more difficult. We are looking into professionals to put our collections in order and who will train us in the handling and care of our treasures.

Updates:

Historical Walking Tours: Thanks to our local historian Preston Conklin, we now have a script for a 1.5 mile historical walk from Town Square to Osceola Library and back. Learn about the history of the people, the buildings and the activities in the Valley. This walk can be guided or self-led. Stay tuned for guided hike dates sometime this spring.

Historical Trolley Tours: We are working on a route and script.

Website: Work continues to develop our website, which will be linked to other Waterville Valley websites.

Facebook: Our Newsletters are now posted on our Facebook page.

Museum: We have begun looking at other small museums and historical societies to gather ideas and suggestions. The proposed location for the Museum is on the Town land also occupied by the Town Library. We are looking into requirements and designs related to the storage, preservation and display of historical materials.

Looking forward:

We have been invited to have an exhibit space at the new Welcome Center. We will be working with the WVAIA to create a space that highlights both organizations.

We are planning a presentation for the Town Meeting in March. It will cover the purpose and goals of the Society, including the benefits of having a historical society, and eventually, a museum, for visitors, residents and the town.

We are planning a series of lectures to begin sometime in March or April on topics related to Valley history and current topics of interest around Valley traditions such as hiking, skiing, fishing, botany, geology and astronomy. We will coordinate these with The Rey Center when possible.

We are working with the Silver Streaks to host a Blood Drive in Waterville Valley. We are talking about hosting a “Victorian Day”, sometime this summer. Discussions with other organizations have all been very positive. We would like to make this a town-wide event.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact us at: wvhistorybuffs@gmail.com or Waterville Valley Historical Society, PO Box 13, Waterville Valley, NH 03215. As always, if you have any interest in working with us in any way, we will be happy to put you to work. We also welcome any ideas you would like to share.

History Tidbit: No kitchens?

Waterville Valley’s resort era began in 1835 when a man with lung trouble who wanted fresh mountain air asked farmer Nathaniel Greeley if he could stay at his farmhouse for a few weeks. The next year he returned with his family, and soon, fishermen and hikers were staying at the “little red cottage” every summer. The first hotel built by Greeley in 1860 to accommodate more guests burned within the year. In 1868 Greeley built a more modest addition to his cottage for 60 guests. The early guests enjoyed the Valley so much that they asked Greeley and later, his son Merrill, for land on which to build a cottage. The Greeleys agreed to sell parcels of land on the condition that the cottage owners take their meals at the hotel. So, the early cottages were built without kitchens. The first was built in 1860 and by 1920 there were 20 cottages, all with paths leading to the Inn. The cottage owners did manage to have a room with a large wood stove, and a sink, ostensibly for doing laundry, but the hotel remained the culinary and social center of the community for many years.

Sources: Goodrich, N.L. *The Waterville Valley*, The North Country Press, Lunenburg, Vt., 1952; Bean, G. H., *The Town at the End of the Road*, Phoenix Publishing, Canaan, N.H.1983; Clara Crosby Ware Goodrich (1888-1982), personal communication.

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