

# POTTER HOUSE

A History by S. Gray

2018

## An Introduction...

Most of Potter House's original clapboard siding has been covered with vinyl. Its masonry is crumbling. Its shutters have been misplaced. There are gobs of lead paint obscuring the details in the original early 19th century woodwork. Its wood floors are undulating, changing their landscape in response to the weight of our lives. But damn, I love this building. It holds me.

When we moved in, we found that a past tenant had painted the woodwork in the kitchen a ghastly, food encrusted, dark burgandy. I'm not sure what they were thinking. It took me days to cover it with white and my wrists ached from working the brush. That was 2010. The first year we filled in the nooks and crannies easily and the building became our home. Later on, as our family grew, Potter House grew with us and we added two rooms from upstairs into our living space. Our neighbor, Nancy Holden, a North Bridgton native, says that our sons' new bedrooms have the best view of the lake in the village and I can't argue with her.

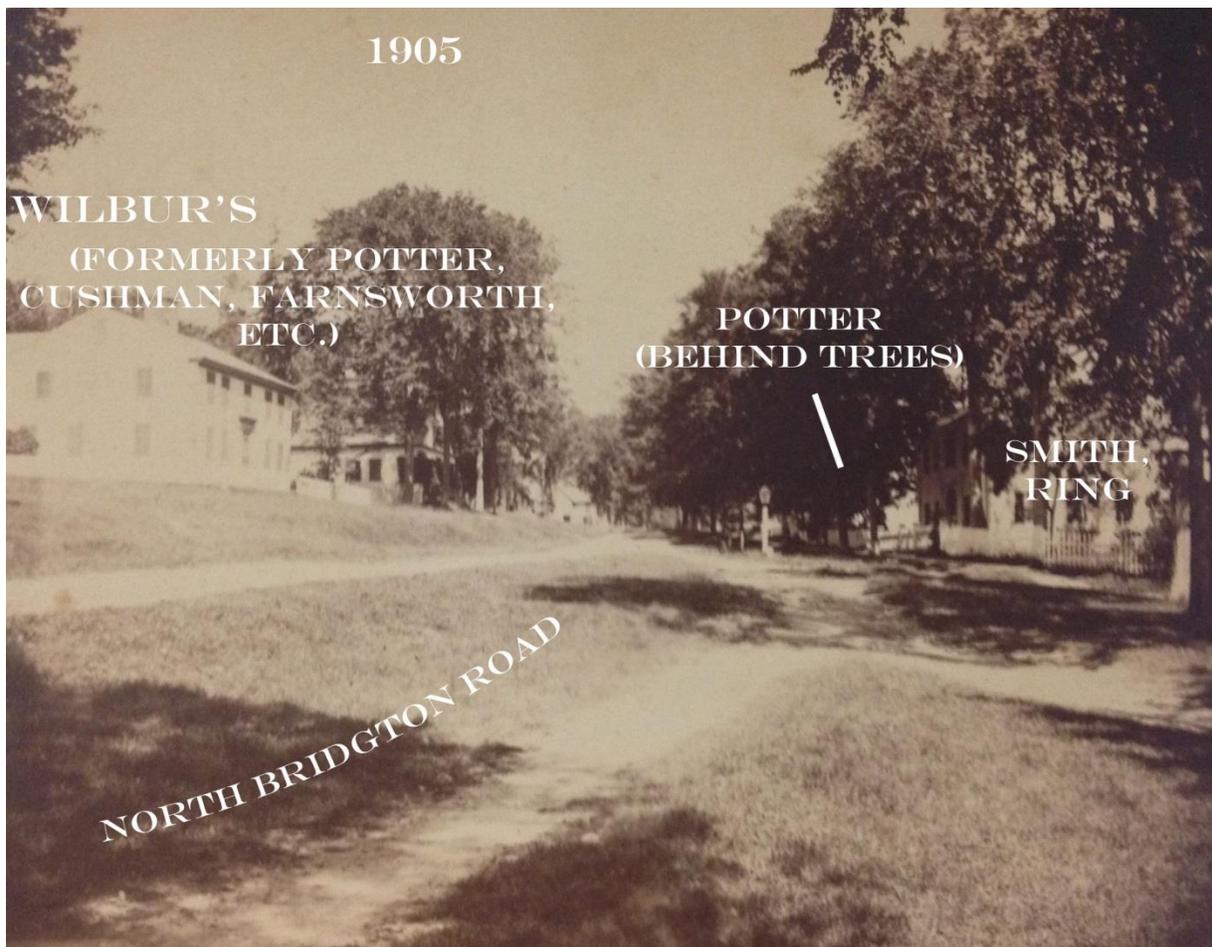
Potter House is probably haunted. Or maybe not. Or maybe it is, depending on what you believe. I'm not sure and I've been here for 8 years. My kids have seen things.....a lady in black in the livingroom who turned off the light, a "bad guy" in the bedroom corner.....I'm not sure what to think. I have more stories if you want to hear them. There are certainly lots of noises to keep our imaginations from getting rusty.

I'm not sure what first piqued my curiosity about the history of Potter House. Maybe it was a subconscious visit from one of our resident spirits, or maybe it was the gnarly square nails and 2ft+ wide boards I found in the basement. Either way, what followed was a frenzy of constant rumination and research that took me by surprise and resulted in this collection of evidence on the house's history. Thank you for sharing it with me.



## An Honest Start...

I do not know for sure when this house was built. The secret has stood, unilluminated, through all my logged hours of research. I have consulted wise locals, old newspapers, rusty nails, deed registries, academy archives, saw marks, historical societies, floor plans, architectural styles, and thick layers of paint. I have even crawled through the darkest corners of the attic searching for the answer and no light was found...but I have a theory.



According to a deed from the Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, on the exact spot Potter House stands now, a man named Hiram Cushman lived in 1838. There were buildings on this land, already established when he purchased it, and it served as a homestead to Hiram and his family. I also came across a survey of historic North Bridgton homes done in the 1970s at the Bridgton Historical Society, and it said that Hiram Cushman owned and lived in the house. It also said that the house was moved to its current spot from the pasture above "Mel Wilbur's". Throughout the survey's house descriptions there is a lot of timeline hopping, and as I was digging, I found out that

Mel Wilbur was an early 1900s local figure who owned the large farmhouse/inn across the street from Potter House's current location. (Bridgton Academy owned it in the 1990s when they tore it down. There is still a stone skeleton left of the foundation and retaining walls.) From there I inferred that they were using a reference to a location that they understood from their own way of relating to the village, and that Mel Wilbur and Hiram Cushman were NOT contemporaries, but instead existed a whole century apart. Wilbur's house, however, is the key to understanding the origin story of Potter House.

Hiram's family was an important part of the North Bridgton village in the early 1800s. His father, George W. Cushman, served on the board of Trustees at Bridgton Academy in its earliest days as an institution of learning. He also built the stately cape that sits adjacent to Potter House out of local bricks. Before that, though, he bought the large farmhouse aforementioned in the previous paragraph from Dr. Samuel Farnsworth Jr. in 1823, enabled by a mortgage financed by the Trustees of Bridgton Academy. He and his family resided there, with Hiram being the eldest child, until unfortunately the mortgage foreclosed for reasons unknown.

During the time that the Cushman family lived in that farmhouse, Hiram and Lucy W. Barnard were married. I believe that, for the occasion of his marriage in 1826, Hiram built Potter House in the pasture above his father's farmhouse for his growing family, just as the survey of historic North Bridgton houses suggests. Perhaps in 1828, a mortgage that his father took out for \$200 on which Hiram was a signed witness was used to finance Hiram's build. Consulting the 1830 U.S. Census records also provides evidence of his independent construction, when it lists Hiram as a head of household, placing him in his own domestic structure in this exact area, proven by other known neighbors of the village listed in proper order around him.

What would inspire Hiram to move his house? Upon the unfortunate event of his father's foreclosure, perhaps, he had to make a decision in order not to lose the house he had built for his family. I believe that the foreclosure was the catalyst that literally dug Potter House up from the ground and transplanted it to its current position on the eastern side of North Bridgton Road. I find it odd that a house would be moved onto land that was owned by someone else, but my 21st century perspective is limited when it comes to understanding real estate of the early 19th. Hiram did not own the land he moved his house onto until 1838, when he purchased it in a deed from Zilpha Andrews, one of the heirs of Samuel "Iron" Andrews. Hiram's father had a similar transaction with

Andrews, building his second North Bridgton house out of brick on borrowed land, with ownership only transferring to him (his heirs) after his death via deed from an heir of Andrews.

According to the evidence, I conclude that Potter House was built in the pasture above the old farmhouse that was across the street in 1828 (or shortly before or after), and in an unexpected turn, was moved to its present spot by 1838 in order to avoid a loss of property and personal investment.

**Know all Men by these Presents, That**  
Lilpha Andrews of Bridgton County of Cumberland & State of Maine Gentlesman  
in consideration of two hundred dollars  
paid by Hiram Cushman of Town County State of Maine  
the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, do hereby remise, release, bargain, sell and convey, and forever quitclaim unto the said *Hiram Cushman*  
heirs and assigns forever, all the right, title and interest in and to a certain tract or parcel of land in Bridgton of Maine in a part of its eleven seventh range of lots in said town bounded as follows westerly by the road leading from Centre Bridgton to Waterford Northwily by land of Solomon Andrews Easterly by land of Polinda Andrews Southwily by land of John S. Potter meaning & intending to convey by these presents all the land lying between said Andrews & Potter's lots agreeable to a plan returned to the Probate office by the Commissioner of the State of the late said Andrews Esq. being the same on which said Cushman now lives  
**TO HAVE AND TO HOLD** THE SAME, together with all the privileges and appurtenances thereunto belonging to *Hiram Cushman* the said *Hiram Cushman* heirs and assigns, forever. And I do covenant with the said *Hiram Cushman* heirs and assigns, that I will warrant and forever defend the premises to the said *Hiram Cushman* heirs and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons claiming by, through, or under me.  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I the said *Lilpha Andrews*  
have hereunto set my hand and seal this *fifteenth* day of *December* in the year of our LORD one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight  
SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED, IN PRESENCE OF  
*Solomon Andrews* *Lilpha Andrews* (Seal)  
CUMBERLAND, ss. *December 15,* 1838 Personally appeared  
the above named *Lilpha Andrews*  
and acknowledged the above instrument to be her free act and deed.—BEFORE ME,  
*Solomon Andrews* Justice of the Peace.  
Received *Dec 18,* 1838 and recorded from the Original by  
*Samuel Small* REGISTER.

## A Tour...

Let's start with the basement. The front rectangle footprint of Potter House is the original structure that has endured for almost 200 years. From our subterranean perspective, we can look up and see the thick timbers used for framing before dimensional lumber became the modus operandi of builders in New England. Just beyond the timbers is a layer of 2ft+ wide boards crossed with distinct marks, long and straight, 1/2inch apart, and parallel, that show us they were cut by an old sash sawmill, probably located on one of the local brooks. In 1910, Potter House was purchased by Carrie E. Smith, who added the large addition off the back, turret, and front porch, and made improvements in the foundation of the whole structure. While we are in the basement, we can see the obvious construction differences between the original house and the addition, including circular saw marks, dimensional lumber, and a tendency towards thinner recycled boards in the newer part.



Skipping right up to the attic, we can see the same differences in construction. It is quite a sight when you enter the attic, because you can see the contained part of the original roof of the old house, preserved like in a museum. Of course the old cedar shingles are not the actual originals, because they certainly were replaced between 1828 and 1910, but they still provide a fascinating view into the past.

There is a crawl space squeezing through the old roof into the attic portion of the old house that is a fun place to explore if you are feeling brave. I have done it, and believe me, the old construction methods that I described in the basement are evident there, including in its distinguishing façade peak.

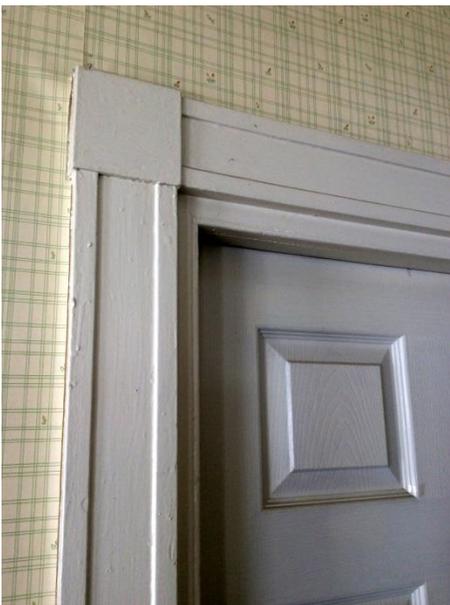
In the basement, attic, and woodwork is an abundance of old square nails...I have done my best to determine their age and I have concluded that they are Type B machine-headed cut nails with the iron fibers running crosswise. This type of nail was in production between 1815 and the late 1830's. Dating a house using the history of nail technology can give vague results for many reasons, but I appreciate that the dates line up with the origin date theory of Potter House.



(Photo above is a selection of nails I've found in the older part of the house. You can see the machine clamped heads and the crosswise iron fibers in the broken nail.)

Now let's stand outside, facing the front entrance. On this western side of the building, the original clapboard siding endures, still solidly held on by its arsenal of square nails. The siding on the northern side was replaced in 1910 when the addition was put on; you can tell by the narrower face of the boards and the rusty round modern nails used. The southern side has been dressed with a coating of white vinyl siding. The decorative verge-board, sometimes called "gingerbread" trim, is not original to the building. It is an accent that fits with the Gothic Revival and Victorian methods of architectural design, which come a bit later than Potter House was built. There have been multiple carpenters that have lived here through the years who could have added the accents to update the house. My theory is that it was Elbridge Potter who added them, as well as the decorative fence

along the front of the property, as you can see in the photo below, taken in 1890. It suits the fashionable trend of Victorian notions at the time.



The Gothic and Victorian accents on the house added later are in contrast to the Federal/Greek Revival design elements in the original construction. Federal and Greek Revival architecture as widespread building trends dominated the first half of the 19th century, and they are characterized by symmetrical facades, central entryways, and lighter, airier, more simplified design elements. And since they are architectural trends based on the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, there tend to be actual pillars and pilasters in the design, as we find in Potter House's fireplace and entryway trim.



(Potter House fireplace in the living room.)

The living room fireplace is a fine example of Federal design, with its smooth, clean lines and understated pilasters on each side. It is also held together with the same nails as mentioned before. I visited the historic home of Tom and Faye Austin just down the street here in North Bridgton, and they have two fireplaces that are virtually identical to Potter House's. Their Federal cape house was built in 1828 for the current Preceptor of Bridgton Academy at the time, Charles Soule.

The only original trim remaining inside Potter house is in the entryway where it gracefully surrounds the windows and doorways (see picture on previous page). Thankfully it hasn't been destroyed; I'm guessing that the original trim throughout the rest of the house was replaced when Bridgton Academy put the modern windows in. Also in the entryway is the delicate central stairway that leads upstairs to what was originally just two bedrooms, but is now a meandering path through

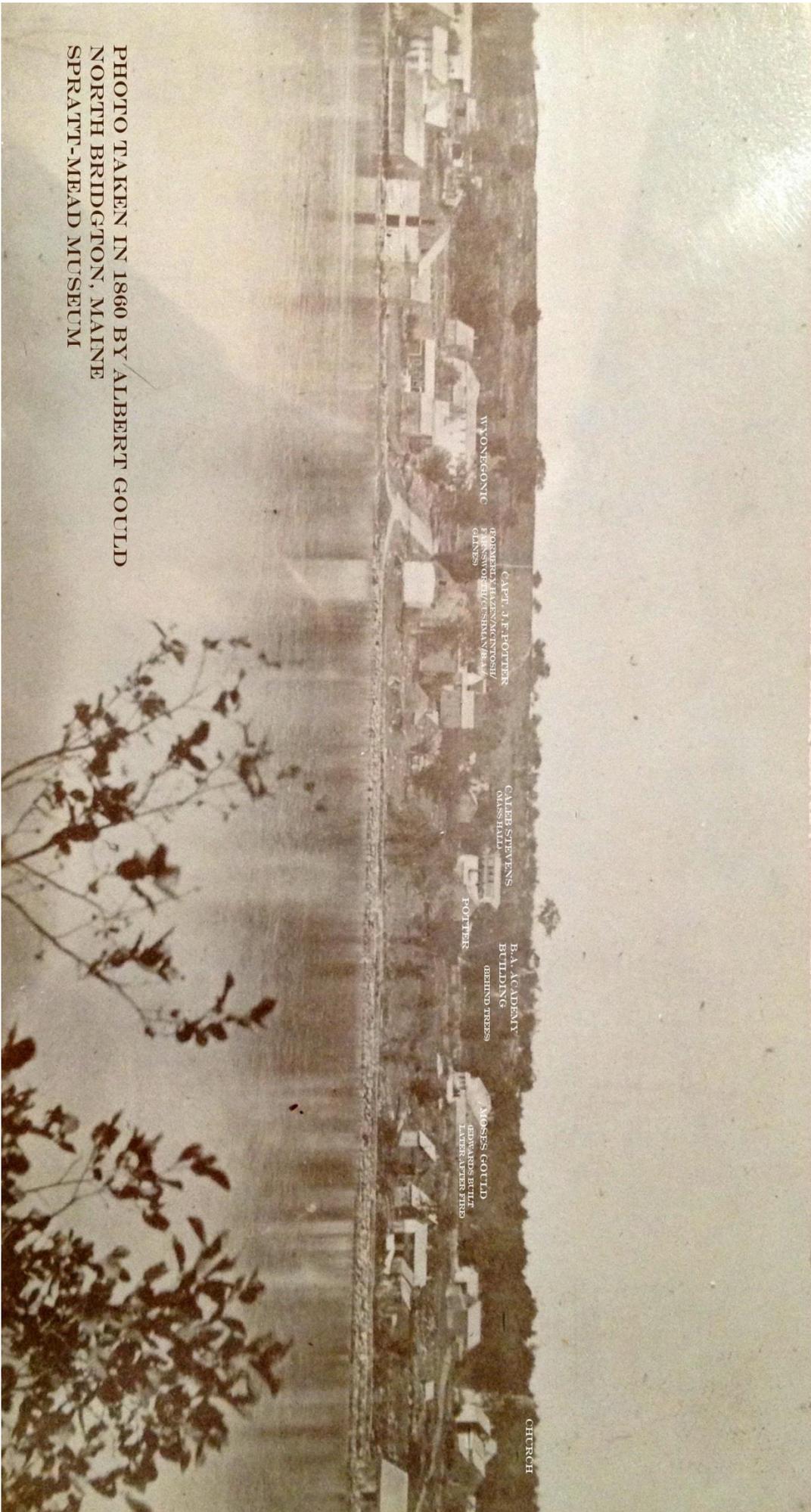
the length of the addition. When I first began researching, I assumed that the staircase was replaced when Carrie E. Smith made all of the changes in 1910, but upon further inspection, I realized that the stairs are in fact original, and probably have not been moved.

There is just enough headroom at the landing for a person of early 1800s stature to stand up and make the turn to either side before hitting the slope of the old roofline. The stairs are full of the same square nails that I have dated to the beginning, the bannister style is similar to the graceful simplicity of the late Federal/early Greek revival period, and the innermost layer of paint on the stairs is chalky and white, resembling the handmade milk paint that was customarily used at the time.



(Above right, entryway stairs. Above, close-up of stairway paint layers.)

It is a shame that so much about Potter House has changed over the years, but so many souls have lived here that in order to shelter them all it has adopted a malleable permanence. I appreciate that. I also appreciate its modern warmth and indoor plumbing.



WYOMINGONIC

CAPT. J. F. POTTER  
FORESTY HAVEN/CROSBY/  
GLINES  
OF BRIDGTON, MAINE

GABRIEL STEVENS  
MASS HALL

POTTER

B.A. ACADEMY  
BUILDING  
(BEHIND TREES)

MOSES GOULD  
GR. BR. BLDG.  
LATER AFTER FIRE

CHURCH

PHOTO TAKEN IN 1860 BY ALBERT GOULD  
NORTH BRIDGTON, MAINE  
SPRATT-MEAD MUSEUM

## The People...

In the beginning, there were Hiram Cushman & Lucy Barnard Cushman, a married couple who built the house in 1828. Hiram was a shoemaker, like his father, George W. Cushman. They had two children, Charles in 1831 and Julia in 1835, both born (I'm assuming) in Potter House. Hiram was a member of the Harrison Lodge and a Colonel in the Maine Militia. Little else is known about Hiram & Lucy, except that they moved to Worcester, MA in the late 1840s and opened a shoe store. Hiram lived there until he died at age 80.

After 20 years in Potter House, Hiram and Lucy sold it to Charles C. Paine, who quickly turned around and sold it to John and Sophronia Hilton, a young couple just beginning their lives together. John was a carpenter, and his wife Sophronia was the daughter of Samuel Andrews, an astute businessman and the original owner of the land that Potter House sits on. John and Sophronia made Potter House their homestead for only two years. Their exodus began when a farm with ties to John's family unexpectedly became available for purchase on the Ridge in Bridgton, so they decided to buy it and go back to their roots.

When the Hiltons left for their dream farm, they sold Potter House in 1852 to Roxana Gibbs. She was a widow with three children, one of whom was Calvin Gibbs, who had left home to seek fortune in Ogdensburg, New York previous to Roxana's purchase. Before moving in, she had been living with her sister, Eliza, in the large Dixey Stone house amidst the well-to-do folks on South High Street in Bridgton. Roxana's late husband, Uriah, was the brother of famed businessman Rufus Gibbs of Bridgton. Uriah met an untimely death in Raymond, Maine at the age of 37. Roxana herself was the granddaughter of an 18th century settler of Bridgton, Asa Kimball, who built a 300-foot long ropewalk on the Ridge.

Roxana's two children remaining in Maine were her daughters Lavinia and Laretta, who were adults when they settled into their new home. Her older daughter, Lavinia, was born in 1825 and named after Roxana's younger sister who died suddenly at the age of 17 just before Lavinia was born. Lavinia (the 2nd) was an artist who taught drawing and painting at Bridgton Academy from 1856 to 1867. During that time, she was struck with a sickness that left her "deaf and dumb", according to the 1860 U.S. Census. She died the day after Christmas in 1871 at the age of 51.

## Bridgton Academy.

*The FALL TERM of this Institution will commence*

Tuesday, September 3d,  
*and continue Eleven weeks.*

JOHN G. WIGHT, A. M., Principal.

NAPOLEON GRAY, A. B., Assistant.

Mrs. HELEN A. FITCH, Music.

Miss L. K. GIBBS,

Drawing and Painting.

*Superior advantages are offered for those pursuing a preparatory course for College. Also for students in the higher Mathematics, practical Surveying, Astronomy, &c.*

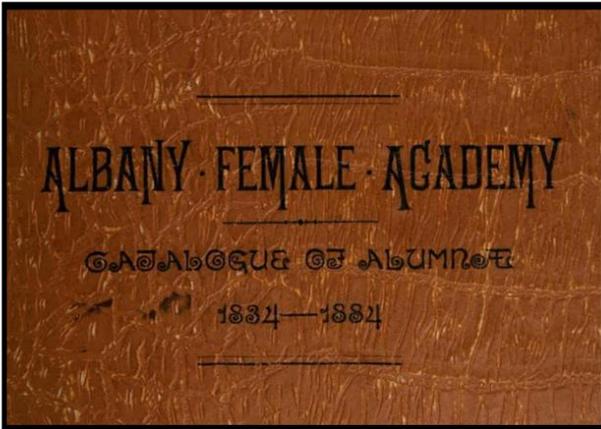
*Text Books furnished by the Principal at Portland prices. Board in the vicinity at reasonable rates.*

THOMAS H. MEAD, SEC'Y.

*North Bridgton. Aug. 7, 1867.*

(A page from the 1867 Bridgton Academy catalog, listing Lavinia as teacher of drawing and painting.)

Lauretta was a teacher as well at Bridgton Academy, at least in 1872, when she was a versatile educator of all subjects. Before that, she had success away from home as a student of multiple academies, an interim high school principal, and an author of high caliber according to the Albany Female Academy's 1889 Alumnae Review. In 1879, Roxana and Lauretta received news that Calvin, who had been living in Ogdensburg, had died of heart disease at the age of 49. Tragically, Lauretta died soon after from tuberculosis at the age of 51. Roxana spent some time in Ogdensburg with her son's family, but soon returned and lived the rest of her years alone here in Potter House until she died in 1883 at the age of 82.



HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF  
**The Albany Female Academy.**  
FOUNDED A. D. 1814.  
SKETCHES OF  
THE ALUMNÆ ASSOCIATION,  
THE SEMPER FIDELIS SOCIETY,  
THE DANA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,  
WITH  
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES,  
AND  
CATALOGUE OF PRESIDENTS, PRINCIPALS AND ALUMNÆ.  
1834—1884.  
ALBANY, N. Y.  
BRANDOW & BARTON, PRINTERS, 15 NORTH PEARL STREET.  
1884.

The class of '45 furnished the Academy with one of its most highly esteemed teachers. In Miss Mary Mather the alumnae take great pride as one of the finest representatives of their number. The highest eulogy was given her at the time of her decease, and she still lives in the memory of those who knew her as one "whose beautiful consistency, patient endurance, lovely self-forgetfulness, earnestness, and holy aspirations" were united with unusual intellectual ability and superior acquirements. A bas-relief of Miss Mather's fine head was placed in the chapel by her pupils.

One of the class of '48, Miss Lauretta Gibbs, is the subject of a long and interesting account, from which we take the following notes: In addition to her academic course pursued in her native place, she spent some time at Bradford Academy, and subsequently finished her student life at the Albany Female Academy. This thorough preparation enabled her to sustain a high reputation as a teacher and to occupy several very desirable positions, finally assuming the duties of the principal of the New Haven High School during his enforced absence by reason of ill health. Her connection with this school was of short duration, the illness of a sister requiring her presence at home. Her devotion to this sister through the illness that terminated her life, brought Miss Gibbs also into the struggle with consumption, and after alternations of hope and discouragement she finally yielded to this scourge of New England. Her abilities were rare, and even during the years of protracted illness the productions of her pen found a place in some of our most prominent journals. A prize story, entitled "Daisy Seymour", was published in book form, she having been successful in competing for the prize offered by the Massachusetts Sunday School Society. Her well-balanced Christian character, with her intellectual acquirements and general culture, made her loss deeply and widely mourned.

Miss Emily S. Oakey, a graduate of the class of 1850, has so lately left a large circle of pupils and friends that their hearts are still overflowing with affection for her, and their lips have not yet ceased to speak her praise. The following tribute is furnished by one of her intimate friends: "To no member of its wide circle does the alumnae owe such a debt of gratitude for faithful and able support, and none could more justly claim honorable distinction in its annals for conspicuous talent and noble achievement. For nearly twenty-five years

(Excerpt from an alumni catalog of Lauretta's alma mater, The Albany Female Academy.)

Since Roxana had no remaining children, her estate went to two groups of distant relatives who organized themselves and sold Potter House to local farmer and real estate investor James Webb via two deeds in 1885. He briefly rented out the house until 1888, when he sold it to Elbridge Potter

in a real estate deal involving Potter's recently deceased father's farm (which is the same farmhouse that Hiram built his house above, in an interesting turn of events.). I believe that Elbridge Potter was looking to downsize from a 30 acre farmstead to a more manageable homestead across the road, and that he was left with a considerable surplus of funds after that transaction that he used for improvements on his new home, such as a new stable, decorative verge-board, elaborate fencing, etc., as we can see in the photo below taken in 1890.



An important side note to this writing is how I went about some of my research. The Bridgton News has archived all of their editions online back to 1870. When searching these articles, I prioritized mentions of the house itself, directly, as evidence of its continued existence as a structure. Deeds, although valuable, are unreliable sources for any type of description of the actual buildings that existed on the land the deed describes. As you can see in the following news snippet from 1889, the house is mentioned directly (including naming a boarder, Mr. Waldron, who stayed in the house briefly while Webb was the owner):

**THE BRIDGTON NEWS**  
 ESTABLISHED SEPT. 1870.  
 PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING.  
 [Entered at the Post Office at Bridgton, Maine  
 as second-class mail matter.]  
 SUBSCRIPTION TERMS.—\$1.50 per annum, in  
 advance; \$2.00 where payment is delayed  
 until after the close of the year.  
 Bridgton, Me., Friday, April 5, '89.

**NORTH BRIDGTON:—**

This village will soon be the scene of a "moving spectacle." Yea, a number of such spectacles, simultaneously. Household goods and chattels will be traveling this way and that way, as though a tide-wave of immigration had rolled in from Long Lake, or else there was to be a general exodus of its citizens. This general movement will take place about the first of May. In the first place, Mr. E. G. Waldron moves out of the Widow Gibbs' house; where to he has not yet decided. Thereupon Elbridge Potter, who has sold his homestead place to James Webb and bought of him the Widow Gibbs' stand, moves into his new purchase. Horace A. Hall, the trader in the brick store, moves out of John Mead's house into the Potter house, when vacated by Elbridge. John and Carroll Mead move from the Blake house—to which the sisters Hattie and Annie Blake have returned, from Fryeburg—into John's house.

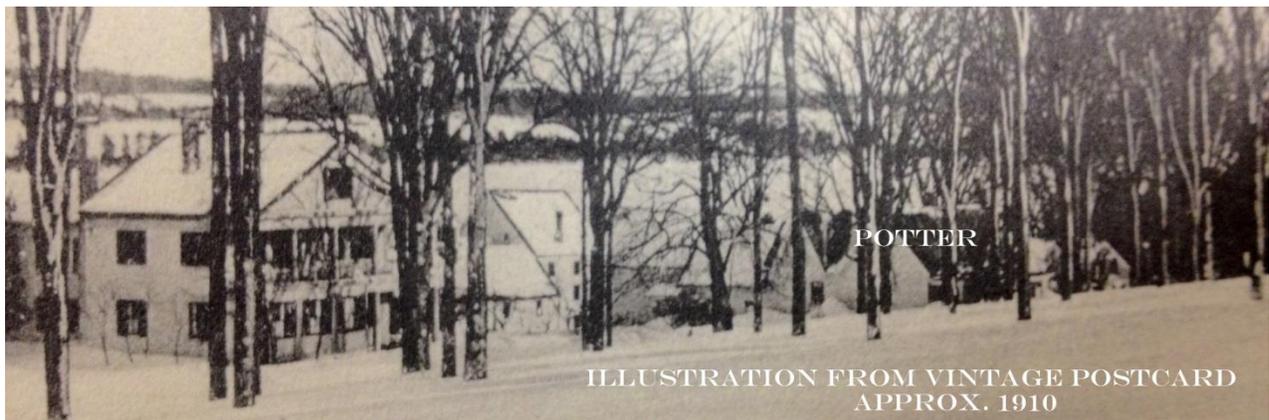
As may be seen by her card in our advertising department, M. M. Anderson

Do not be confused by the use of "Potter House" in this news article. That name is referring to the large farmhouse across the street that was owned by Capt. John F. Potter for many years, and that Elbridge inherited and sold to James Webb. Our "Potter House" is referred to as the "Widow Gibbs' house" because of the long 30 year tenure she spent there.

Elbridge and his wife Mary had one living child named Frank. He grew up to become a reverend living in Eliot, Maine with his wife and children. Elbridge and Mary lived alone in Potter House, except for when Mary's sister, Mrs. Elvira Newbegin, came for an extended visit of 6 years, ending in her death of "consumption" in 1899. There is evidence of ill health in Elbridge as well; as the years went by, he and his wife would increasingly close their home for the winter and go spend it with Frank and his family in Eliot. In the end, Elbridge tragically passed away of a self-inflicted injury, of which sickness and pain could have been a catalyst.



Upon Elbridge's death, his son Frank became executor of the estate, who immediately deeded Potter House over to his mother, Elbridge's widow Mary. Mary soon after sold the land and homestead to Edith Henson, one-half of a couple from Boston who had made a habit of summering in North Bridgton via the old Songo Hotel, which is now the Wyonegonic faculty housing building for Bridgton Academy. During their short stint as owners of Potter House, the large house that used to stand on Nancy Holden's land next door burned down in a tumultuous blaze. That house was known as the Samuel C. Smith house, and Samuel Ring was the owner at the time of the fire. Strenuous effort was made in order to save the Hensen's house from burning down as well.



(Below is a close-up of a vintage postcard in which the Samuel C. Smith house is in the foreground, and Potter House is hidden just beyond by the trees as we look north up the street.)



After the fire that destroyed their neighbor's house, the Hensens purchased the ruins and the land, turning it into a sloping lawn extension of their current property. They soon grew tired of summering in North Bridgton and sold it all in 1910 to Carrie E. Smith, someone with origins from outside of Maine as well.

Carrie E. Smith's tenure as the owner of Potter House certainly had the most impact physically. She had any barns or stables torn down from the back of the house and in their place put the large two-story addition as we see it today. She also added the turret and front porch to the character of the building. Her intentions were to turn Potter House into a sanitarium for people with nervous disorders. That never came to fruition, however. Instead, Miss Smith rented out the building to boarders until she sold it in 1919. Another interesting note; Miss Smith was also the owner of the lot that was sold to the Library Association on which the North Bridgton Library building now stands.

# THE BRIDGTON NEWS

H. A. Shorey & Son, Editors and Publishers

BRIDGTON, Maine. - - NOVEMBER 11, 1910

## Sanitarium at North Bridgton.

Miss Carrie E. Smith, who sometime ago purchased the "Elbridge Potter" place at North Bridgton of Dr. P. S. Hensen who bought it several years prior to this with the intention of making North Bridgton his permanent home sometime in the future, has been making extensive alterations. A large wing, considerably larger than the main house and extending towards the lake, is being built and the house will be fitted up as a sanitarium for the care of patients suffering from nervous disorders. The house will probably not be opened for this purpose until sometime the coming spring.

When Miss Smith decided not to continue as owner, she sold Potter House to the Drake family of Providence, Rhode Island, another set of folks with an affinity for summering in Maine. Eugene, Pauline, and their daughter Helen spent their summers here in Potter House for over 20 years. The neighborhood knew Mrs. Drake for her gardening and the grounds of Potter House were always beautifully landscaped during that time. During their ownership, they purchased the brick Cushman house around the corner for their daughter Helen after she got married. When Mr. & Mrs. Drake passed away, both houses were left to their daughter Helen, who soon sold them in a group deal to Bridgton Academy in 1942.



That concludes Potter House's story as a private building. Since 1942, it has dutifully served as a dormitory and faculty home for Bridgton Academy, a venerable institution that has been educating students since 1808. The details of its tenure for BA are plentiful and would serve nicely as the subject of another paper on another day, but I will end my research here.

**THANK YOU!**





Map from the Bridgton Historical Society's book, "Bridgton, Maine"

# Bridgton News Archive Articles

## Bridgton Academy.

With the desire of speaking more fully in our columns of the arrangements and prospects of Bridgton Academy, we recently had an interview with one of the Trustees, and learn that regarding the high character and ability of the coming Principal there can be no doubt, as numerous letters and testimonials to that effect have been received from distinguished educational men at Cambridge, Boston and elsewhere; and predicated an opinion upon that basis, together with the known reputation of the Assistants now being engaged, we may reasonably consider the success of the School as fairly ensured. Arrangements for the full staff of Assistants are not yet completed; but we understand that it is quite probable that Mr. C. C. Sampson of Bowdoin College will instruct in the Mathematical Department. Mr. Sampson is a young man of excellent reputation, fine scholarship, an adept in Mathematics, and will make a specialty of that Department during the Term. It is also expected that Miss Laurelia Gibbs will instruct in such branches as the interests of the School may demand. Miss Gibbs is a lady of substantial character and cultivated endowments. Her educational attainments embrace a full knowledge of all Academic studies, and withal she is intuitively possessed of admirable tact and talent for the art of all arts, the natural art of aptly and lucidly imparting instruction. She has for several years been successfully engaged in teaching in some of the best schools in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Her engagement must be regarded as a valuable acquisition, and will add much to the general character and reputation of the School. The Teacher of Vocal and Instrumental Music is Mrs. Hamlin, of whom we have so often spoken in just terms of commendation, and who is so favorably known in this vicinity that it becomes almost superfluous to add that her qualifications are of a superior order, and fully ample for that position. In fine, we repeat our

## THE BRIDGTON NEWS

ESTABLISHED SEPT., 1870.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING.

[Entered at the Post Office at Bridgton, Maine as second-class mail matter.]

Subscription Terms:—\$1.50 per annum, in advance; \$2.00 where payment is delayed until after the close of the year.

Bridgton, Me., Friday, April 12, '89.

Lake are beds of sawdust several acres in extent and of a thickness of from one to five feet. This act cannot fail to be beneficial to fish propagation. Elbridge Potter will build a new stable, this season, to his recent purchase, the Gibbs house, at North Bridgton. Miss L. E. Gibson, teacher of elocution in Bridgton Academy, who will be connected with the Fryeburg Academy after Apr. 15th, will return to assist the senior class with their graduating parts. Jas. Webb of Portland proposes to lay out his purchase of the Pine woods' lot and the Potter farm, into building lots and put them on sale. There has here-

## Weekly News.

Price—Single copy, \$1.50 per annum, in advance; \$1.75 if not paid within six months date of subscription; \$2.00 if payment is delayed to the end of the year.

### TERMS OF ADVERTISING.

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 Each additional insertion, per square, 85  
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 Two squares, one year, ..... 15.00  
 Three squares, one year, ..... 20.00  
 Quarter column, one year, ..... 25.00  
 Half column, one year, ..... 35.00  
 One column, one year, ..... 120.00

Bridgton, Friday, Jan. 26th, 1872.

## THE BRIDGTON NEWS.

ESTABLISHED SEPT., 1870.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING.

[Entered at the Post Office at Bridgton, Maine as second-class mail matter.]

Subscription Terms:—\$1.50 per annum, in advance; \$2.00 where payment is delayed until after the close of the year.

Bridgton, Me., Friday, Oct. 26, '88.

pictures of his old home and other boyhood scenes.

Elbridge Potter has sold his stand, the Capt. John Potter place, to James Webb of Portland, of whom he at the same time bought the "Mrs. Gibbs stand," near by. Mr. Potter will remain, however, for the present, at the old stand. It is understood that Mr. Webb will rent the Gibbs house and will make radical improvements upon the Potter premises. Mr. Webb has also bought of Dr. Weston the land (opposite John Mead's) at the south part of the village from which the pine timber was lately taken off.

Miss Bertha G. Webb, the young solo violinist who recently gave a perform-

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Bridgton, Me., Friday, July 18, '90

Sophomore class at the State College, Orono. J. A. Nichols, '87, enters Bowdoin.

Vacation extends to Sept. 2d.

Elbridge Potter has repainted and otherwise improved his buildings.

## EAST HIRAM:

A Lodge of Pythian Sisterhood is being talked of.

L. A. Wadsworth, Esq., has recovered from his recent illness.

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## Advertising Rates.

Per Column (20 inches) one year,	\$100.00
One-half Column, " "	50.00
One-fourth " " "	30.00
Transient Advertising—one inch of space, one week, 75 cents; three weeks, \$1.50.	

Bridgton, Me. Friday, Oct. 27, 1899

# THE BRIDGTON NEWS.

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BRIDGTON, MAINE, JULY 27, 1900.

Rev. Frank C. Potter, wife and three sons, after a month's visit to his parental home, Elbridge Potter's, at North Bridgton, have returned to Elliot. His health, by reason of overwork, is somewhat impaired, and he takes a much-needed rest. He is still pastor of the M. E. Church at Elliot, and is a faithful and popular clergyman. Mr. Potter and family were intending to go to York Beach for an outing, but were obliged to defer so doing on account of the children being taken down with measles.

Sold by F. C. Knight.

Mrs. Elvira Newbegin died suddenly Saturday evening, at the home of her sister, Mrs. Elbridge Potter, in North Bridgton. She had been for some time in poor health, her disease being consumption, but was about the house as usual that day, and the end came without premonition. There was a brief service at the house, Tuesday afternoon, conducted by Rev. Mr. Fitz, following which the remains, accompanied by Mr. Potter, were taken to Kezar Falls, where the funeral and burial took place the following day. Mrs. Newbegin was born 58 years ago in Parsonsfield, where her girlhood years were passed. After the death of her husband and two sons, she came to North Bridgton to reside, where for the last six years she made her home. Denominationally, Mrs. Newbegin was a Congregationalist, and a member of that Church. She leaves three sisters and one brother—Mrs. Potter, Mrs. Langley of New Haven, Conn., Mrs. Kezar of Parsonsfield, and Harding Newbegin of Kezar Falls. During her stay at North Bridgton this lady made many warm friends, who share with the family the sorrow of their bereavement. She was a person of fine culture and refinement, and of marked kindness of heart and practical benevolence.

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**THE BRIDGTON NEWS**

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BRIDGTON, ME., SEPT. 30, 1904

**THE BRIDGTON NEWS**

Published at BRIDGTON, (Cumberland County) MAINE.  
ESTABLISHED 1870

H. A. SHOREY & SON, EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS

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BRIDGTON, - MARCH 15, 1907

**THE BRIDGTON NEWS**

Published at BRIDGTON, (Cumberland County) MAINE.  
ESTABLISHED 1870

H. A. SHOREY & SON, EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS

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BRIDGTON, - MARCH 22, 1907

ably reach Bridgton Friday or Saturday.

\* \* \*

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. P. S. Hensen of Boston, who recently purchased the Elbridge Potter house at North Bridgton as a summer home, were in town this week. Dr. Hensen has just purchased the lot on which the house of Samuel Ring, the old Algernon Howe residence, stood, destroyed by fire last week. This lot adjoins the Henson summer home and will be converted into a lawn. Mr. Ring has reserved the stable which will be moved off.

\* \* \*

Bridgton friends will be interested in

**North Bridgton Landmark Destroyed by Fire.**

A telephonic message was received from North Bridgton Tuesday forenoon, stating that the large two story and a half house on the corner of Main and Lake streets, owned by Samuel Ring but better known as the Samuel C. Smith house, was going up in flames and that the adjoining property was in danger. A request was made that the steam fire engine of the Village Corporation be sent to North Bridgton, together with a detachment of the fire company. Chief Engineer George H. Knights got together several members of his company and started with all due haste for the scene of the fire, the steamer being drawn by four horses. It arrived at North Bridgton just in time to save the stable of the burning house and to prevent the fine summer residence of Dr. Hensen of Boston from going up in smoke.

Of course it is not just clear how the fire started, but the probability is that it caught around the chimney. Before it was discovered it was well under way, and as the fire fighting apparatus of the North Bridgton village is primitive, very little could be done toward checking the flames. At the time of the fire a wind was blowing up the street in the direction of the academy campus. Several buildings must have gone had it not been for the heroic efforts of those first on the scene and but for the assistance from Bridgton Village.

When it was seen that the house proper could not be saved, the volunteer fire fighters tore down the ell and thus stayed the fire until the steamer from Bridgton could arrive and assist in the fight. But for this the stable would probably have gone, and in this case adjoining buildings also. Upon the arrival of the fire engine, however, a line of hose was quickly laid from the lake to the house, and in a surprisingly short time Chief Engineer Knights had a stream of water playing upon the stable and stood ready to ward off the fire from the other buildings. Fortunately, however, there was no need of assistance outside of the burning house as the flames did not communicate to others.

The house was for years the property of Samuel U. Smith, but has lately been sold to Samuel Ring, who occupied it at the time of the fire. The loss is estimated at about \$2000 on the house, covered by an insurance of \$1000 on the house and \$400 on the stable. There was also an insurance of \$1000 on the furnishings, but the most of these were saved. The house was built in the early 30's.

Pond region may result.

**Elbridge C. Potter.**

Elbridge C. Potter passed away at his home in North Bridgton, Tuesday, as the result of injuries inflicted to himself some weeks ago. It will be remembered that Mr. Potter in a fit of despondency attempted his own life by cutting his throat with a knife and afterwards inflicting other injuries upon himself. He was unsuccessful at the time and it is thought that his life would be spared but his constitution was such that it could not withstand the shock and after lingering between life and death for about two weeks, the latter conquered.

The deceased has been a life-long resident of North Bridgton, where he has led an exemplary life and where he has been looked up to and respected by all who had dealings with him in any way. He was a member of the Congregational church of that place and he has always taken an active part in the services and has had the welfare of the society at heart. Of late years however, he has been in ill health, and brooding over his physical condition, made him despondent and in all probability affected his mental system. He was a man, however, for whom there was little cause for worry, as he was possessed of some little property, ample enough to care for him and his family in their old age.

The funeral services were held at the late home in North Bridgton Thursday, attended by Rev. F. E. Winn, pastor of the Congregational church. There was a large attendance of the friends and neighbors and there was a profusion of floral offerings.

Mr. Potter was born Feb. 12, 1842, the son of Capt. J. F. and Eliza Ann (Hilton) Potter. Of the immediate family he leaves a widow and one son, the latter Rev. Frank C. Potter, who has a pastorate in another part of the state. Both he and his wife were in attendance upon the funeral. The widow will remain at the North Bridgton residence during the coming fall and winter.

Rev. J. H. Saer of the Congregational

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BRIDGTON, - OCTOBER 4, 1907

of burst.

After the destructive fire of last spring when the Samuel Smith-Ring house was burned it was feared that this historic old place would be left a disfigurement to the pretty Main street of North Bridgton Village. It is pleasant to note that such fears were ungrounded. The property was immediately purchased by the Rev. Dr. Hensen of Tremont Temple, Boston, the old barn removed and the site of the former buildings has been made into a beautifully sloping lawn, extending from the Hensen place to the pond road. The artistic treatment much improves the appearance of that section of the village.

# THE BRIDGTON NEWS.

H. A. Shorey & Son, Editors and Publishers

BRIDGTON, Maine, - - OCTOBER 15, 1909

Rev. Dr. P. S. Hensen, a North Bridgton summer resident—and who owns a fine place on one of the village streets and bordering the lake—is now registered at Hotel Hollywood, Hollywood, Cal., where he intends to make his future home. He is offering his North Bridgton cottage, grounds and furnishings, for sale.

The football game which Bridgton

# THE BRIDGTON NEWS

H. A. Shorey & Son, Editors and Publishers

BRIDGTON, Maine, - - MAY 27, 1910

last of June for a two months stay.

Rev. P. S. Hensen and wife are back to North Bridgton for a brief season. They have sold their property there but the purchaser will not occupy it until late in the summer. The Hensens will locate in Dorchester, Mass.

Negotiations pending for some time

# THE BRIDGTON NEWS

H. A. Shorey & Son, Editors and Publishers

BRIDGTON, Maine, - - SEPTEMBER 30, 1910

Dr. P. S. Henson has recently sold his house at North Bridgton to a Miss Smith, who is making considerable alteration in the property. The stable is to be removed to a lot purchased of Mrs. Susan Dudley and converted into a dwelling house for rental.

The members of the Bridgton Literary

# THE BRIDGTON NEWS

H. A. Shorey & Son, Editors and Publishers

BRIDGTON, Maine - - NOVEMBER 11, 1910

## THE BRIDGTON NEWS

H. A. SHOREY & SON, Proprietors

BRIDGTON, MAINE

FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1919.

also Prof. Islay F. McCermack's cottage on the shore of the lake.

E. L. E. Drake, of Providence, R. I., who purchased Miss Carrie Smith's house this spring, is here for the summer, with Mrs. Drake and daughter, Miss Helen Drake.

Frank Chadbourne recently purchased a Ford car.

### Sanitarium at North Bridgton.

Miss Carrie E. Smith, who sometime ago purchased the "Elbridge Potter" place at North Bridgton of Dr. P. S. Hensen who bought it several years prior to this with the intention of making North Bridgton his permanent home sometime in the future, has been making extensive alterations. A large wing, considerably larger than the main house and extending towards the lake, is being built and the house will be fitted up as a sanitarium for the care of patients suffering from nervous disorders. The house will probably not be opened for this purpose until sometime the coming spring.

DECEMBER 8, 1944

## THE BRIDGTON NEWS

BRIDGTON, MAINE

H. A. Shorey, Jr., Editor and Publisher

DECEMBER 1, 1944.

## THE BRIDGTON NEWS

BRIDGTON, MAINE

H. A. Shorey, Jr., Editor and Publisher

Mrs. Whitney also had a call from her father Lewis Merrill of Harrison.

The news of Mrs Drake's death came as a surprise to her friends here, altho it was known that she was in poor health. Mrs Drake will be missed here in many ways. She was always ready to help in any cause for the benefit of the place, and her home was a place of beauty with its flowers and finely kept grounds, when help was available to keep it so.

News has come that Rodney Austin is ill. No particulars are known at this

Pauline Cox Jordan Drake, widow of Eugene L. E. Drake, passed away at the age of 75 at her home in Newark, N. J. on November 27th, 1944. Mrs Drake has been a summer resident of North Bridgton for about thirty years. For the past eight years she has been in failing health but was able to spend her 75th birthday last summer at her home in North Bridgton. She leaves a daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. William E. Hocker of Short Hills, New Jersey, and two grandchildren, Jane Moor Hocker and Pic William Drake Hocker, who is serving in the Infantry.

JULY 5 1946

**THE BRIDGTON NEWS**  
BRIDGTON, MAINE

H. A. Shorey, Editor and Publisher

**BRIDGTON ACADEMY**

Although it seems a long time until the opening of school in September, plans for the forthcoming school year are already underway at BA. The school has recently purchased the Drake property and the adjoining Hocker home in North Bridgton and will use the former as the girls' dormitory. Cleaves Hall which has housed the girls since the fall of 1943 will be used for the civilian boys, while Massachusetts Hall will be occupied by the 33 veterans who will attend school. In addition to the new buildings, Ingalls Hall is being remodeled to give more classroom space and library space.

**THE BRIDGTON NEWS**

Bridgton, Maine, Thursday, February 28, 1980

**HELEN DRAKE HOCKER**

SHORT HILLS, N.J. — Helen Drake Hocker, 82, of Short Hills, N. J., and a summer resident of North Bridgton, died recently after a long illness.

Mrs. Hocker was born in Boston, Ma., grew up in Providence, R. I., and moved to Newark, N. J. In 1945 she made her permanent home in Short Hills.

An artist herself, she was a member of the Pen and Brush Club, New York City; American Artists Professional League, N. Y. City; Milburn-Short Hills Art Center and the National Association of Women Artists, N. Y. City.

She leaves a son, William D. Hocker of North Bridgton; a daughter, Mrs. Jane H. Daly of Short Hills, N. J.; three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on Feb. 22 at the Presbyterian Church in New Providence, N. J., with interment in the Hilltop Cemetery, Mendham, N. J.

## Resources and Acknowledgments

- 1) The Bridgton Historical Society was an incredibly valuable resource for me during my research. Their museum was a joy to visit on Gibbs Rd. off Main St. in Bridgton. Their published tome, "Bridgton, Maine 1768-1994: An Updated Bicentennial History" was rich with clues for my puzzle. The most consulted and most useful of their contributions was the Bridgton News Digital Archive that they have meticulously scanned and is available online at <http://bridgton.advantage-preservation.com/> back to the 1870s.
- 2) The Bridgton Academy Archive and The Spratt-Mead Museum were productive resources as well. Thank you Jessica and Michelle for helping me gain access and for your patience and interest in my project. Many of the photos I used came from Bridgton Academy's collections.
- 3) The Cumberland County Registry of Deeds online is where I found all of the deeds included in my research. You can access it at [i2a.uslandrecords.com](http://i2a.uslandrecords.com), just be sure you have your pop-up blocker disabled.
- 4) I am fortunate to have Nancy Holden as a neighbor. She has been a joy to talk to and has honored me by taking an interest in my research. She has also been generous in lending me a copy of the Bridgton Historical Society's book, as well as a short published book of anecdotal stories written by Guy Monk called "The Story of North Bridgton, Maine".
- 5) I would also like to thank Tom and Faye Austin for letting me visit their home for my research. I found fantastic clues there, including their fireplace design and the historic saw-marks and boards in their basement that are akin to Potter House's.
- 6) <http://npshistory.com/publications/nail-chronology.pdf> is where I found my information on old nails.
- 7) [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) is where I found my information on death records, birth records, and U.S. Census records.
- 8) [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) is where I found information on graves I could not visit. The Ridge Cemetery on Chadbourne Hill Rd. and the North Bridgton Cemetery on Kimball Rd. were ones that I did visit in person. The Ridge Cemetery includes the graves of six people who have lived in Potter House over the years.
- 9) [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) was where I found general information on many subjects, including architectural styles.
- 10) I consulted an online book in Google Books called, "Historical Sketch of the Albany Female Academy: Sketches of the Alumnae" by the Albany Female Academy, written in 1884.
- 11) Two other Google Books I consulted were "Americans and Their Forests: A Historical Geography" by Michael Williams, and "Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings" by Thomas Durant Visser. They were very informative on the history of sawmill technology.

*This House Has Been Around A Long Time But...*

Someday these walls will crumble like a cookie.  
The paint will peel off in gooey strips that will hang low to fill up the empty space.  
The floors will buckle, making walking a dangerous game.  
After two centuries of success the roof will fail,  
Sagging down lower and lower,  
Until it gives into death,  
And lets the  
Water  
Pour  
In.

But  
It's just  
An abstraction  
After all, a conglomeration  
Of trees, sliced down from their  
Natural state and rearranged as a human brain saw fit.....*but what about the memories?*