



The Marlow Historical Society's mission is to preserve and illuminate Marlow's history

A TASTE OF MARLOW
by Maria M. Baril

Fall 2023

Although we think of taverns as purveyors of beer and liquor, early taverns were, in fact, Marlow's first eateries. Besides providing a place of rest and recovery for weary travelers, they were true "public houses" open to all in the community, and they were required, by law, to offer food.

In their book *On the Road North of Boston: New Hampshire Taverns and Turnpikes, 1700 -1900*, Donna-Belle and James L. Garvin describe the importance of the tavern: "It provided a meeting place for the local electorate and for social organizations... By its very nature, it was a place of comfort, relaxation, and gossip, a home away from home.... The tavern offered fellowship, enhanced by the bottle, the pipe, the shared and dog-eared newspaper, and the diverting spectacle of the passing world." In short, they were vital to the wellbeing of the community.

Early taverns were required to offer food, but that doesn't mean that they had a varied menu to choose from. There was usually one entree served at a meal. Three meals were served: breakfast, dinner, and supper; tea might have been offered in the afternoon. Breakfast was a large meal and usually consisted of the same menu as supper. A typical menu was:

- Breakfast:** Steak and onions; eggs and bacon; hash, pickles, cheese, fish, bread and potatoes
- Dinner:** Roast and potatoes; vegetables; fried eggs, fish, salad; sweet desserts, fresh fruit.
- Tea:** Cheese and cold meats; bread and butter; baked sweets (doughnuts, cakes....)
- Supper:** Steak and onions; eggs and bacon; ham, cheese, fish, bread and potatoes.*

Marlow historian Elgin Jones mentions that James Munsil kept Marlow's first tavern in a house on the road from Marlow Hill to Acworth (now Flagg Road). Another one was kept by Elisha Royce; in 1773 he is mentioned as an "Inn-Holder". General Elijah Huntley "kept open house" on the Hill as early as 1790, and Samuel Richardson opened a tavern at Bakers Corner in 1803.

In 1822 Jonathan Richardson built a tavern near General Huntley's house. Elgin writes: "These were gala days for the Hill. 'Peg' Smith kept a tavern and with his eccentricities, accidental wit, and unassailable good nature, would overlook such pranks as those of Field Officers on Muster days riding horseback to the bar for their treats."

As new roads were built and the village down in "the plains" grew, Elgin's uncle Edmund Jones (1807-1882) and Harvey Newton (1802-1860?) built the **Ashuelot House**. Harvey Newton was a carpenter; Edmund Jones was the innkeeper. For eighteen years Edmund earned a solid reputation, aided by the fabled cooking talent of his wife Marilla Tubbs (1808-1889).

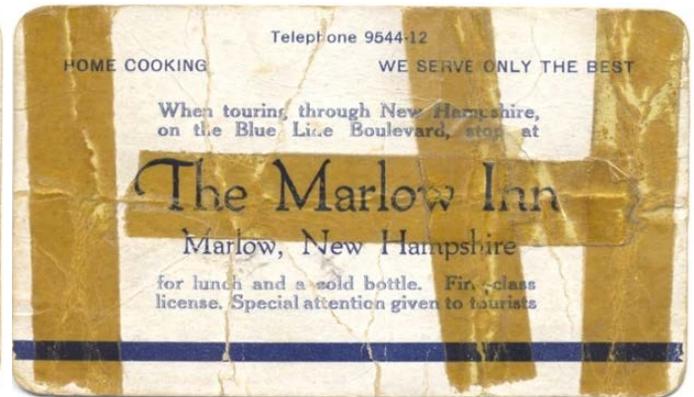
The Ashuelot House changed ownership several times and was renamed The Forest House. In 1890 George Albin Petts became the owner and remained so for fourteen years. He made extensive repairs and added a third story, which, when we look at photos today, was not quite in harmony with the original structure. In 1911 Henry (Harry) Lewis became the last owner of the establishment, which was then called **The Marlow Inn**. It burned down on August 16, 1916, under mysterious circumstances (see our Spring/Summer 2023 newsletter).



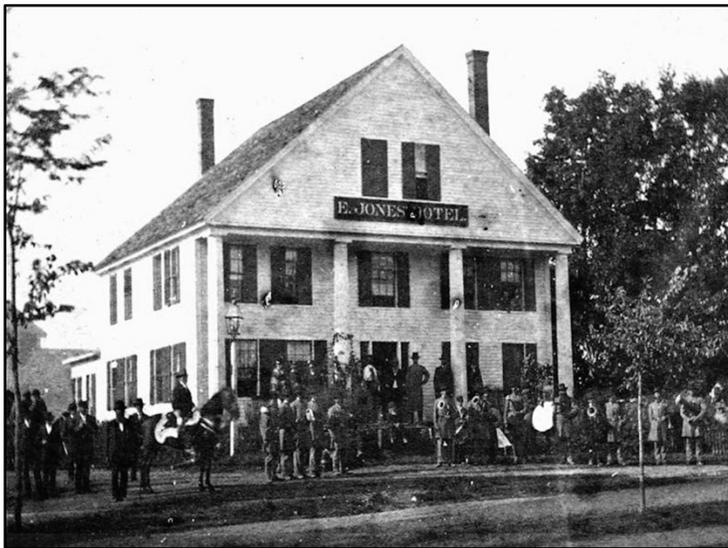
Forest House - before G.A. Petts added 3rd floor in 1898



Forest House with the 3rd floor - G.A. Petts Proprietor



Business card from the Marlow Inn. The Blue Line Boulevard was part of a marketing program of the New England Hotel Association. It developed maps with different colored routes to encourage automobile tourism, and to advertise hotels along the routes. A 1922 map shows the Blue Line Boulevard going through Marlow.



Marlow Town Fair - October 3-4, 1878 - E. Jones Hotel

In 1850 Edmund Jones built a second hotel on Forest Road: "the house with the columns", (now 149 NH Route 123). Elgin Jones writes: "Because he was engaged in Hotels at Bellows Falls and Keene, the house was rented. Returning, he occupied it as a residence. Mr. Drake opened it for a year as a public house to be followed by F. W. Day. Neither of these ventures was successful. Later he operated in a quiet way for a few years until about 1880, after which it was a private residence until 1920. In that year John J. Champney became its owner, opening the house again under the name **Colonial Inn**. About 1860 (unrecorded) Reuben F. Whitney conducted a tavern in the Strickland house."

In 1923 the legendary May Yohe opened **The Blue Diamond Inn** where her husband John Smuts did the cooking, his specialty being South African cuisine. It was located at the corner of Route 10 and Marlow Hill Road, on the right as you face up the hill. You can still find the cellar hole.

There was also the **Riverside Lunch and Filling Station** on Lower Main Street by the Ashuelot River, opened in the late 1920s by Ed Britton and his sister Alice, and operated through the mid-1930s by subsequent owners.



Cellar hole of The Blue Diamond Inn - Fall 2022



Riverside Lunch and Filling Station

Two eateries - quite different one from the other - existed in the 1930s at opposite ends of town. The Schoolhouse #7 building at the corner of Route 10 and Stone Pond Road became **Ann's Waffle Inn**, operated by Ann Bessette.**

And you could ride your carriage to "downtown" Marlow and get some oysters from the meat shop on the lower floor of the **Nichols/Newton Store**, which stood on Lower Main Street (See our Fall 2017 newsletter).

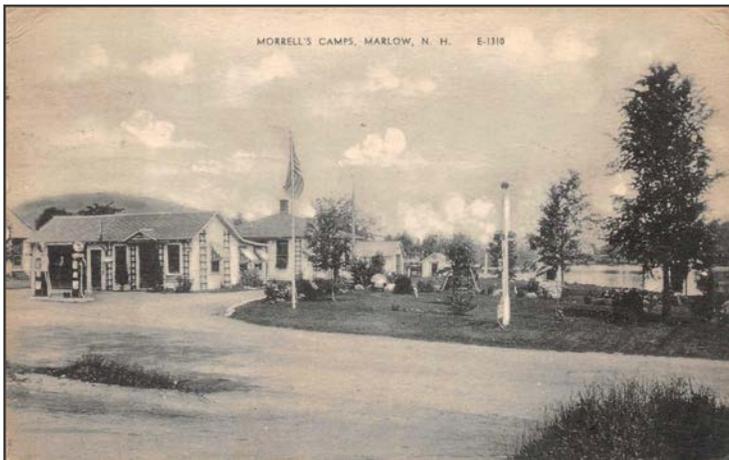


Ann's Waffle Inn, Route 10 by Stone Pond



Oysters available at Nichols/Newton Store on Lower Main Street

Before Interstate 91 was built in the 1950s, Route 10 (the Dartmouth College Highway) was the main route north to the White Mountains and Quebec. To accommodate travelers there were inns, cabins and eateries all along the road, including in Marlow. **Morrell's Cabins** had a restaurant. They were located at the entrance to the village, at the site of the old Marlow store, which itself was one of the original cabins. Owners George S. Morrell and his wife Mary Etta ran the business until 1957.



Morrell's Cabins, Route 10 by Marlow Village

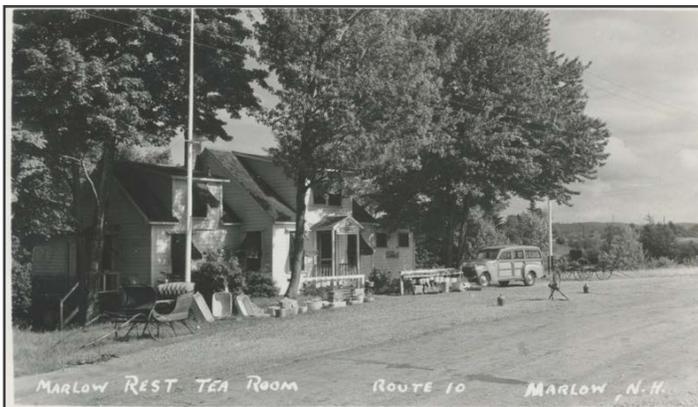
The Burnap house, originally the home of the Farley family, was turned into the **Christmas Trees Inn** by actress Virginia Sale and her husband Sam Wren. Emily Bomely and Susan Rock shared memories of working at the inn in our Winter 2016 newsletter. They remember the dinner buffets: the first course was often "onion soup in little green cups with like saucers."



The R.J. Tubb family enjoying lunch at the Christmas Trees Inn

The property across from the state barn (828 NH Rt. 10) was once the **Marlow Tea Room**, owned by Edward Kaelin. Jack Strickland recalls that his mother, Frannie, worked there as a waitress.

Long's Tearoom stood on the present-day site of the Perkins Academy. It burned in the 1941 fire. And the **Lunch Room** stood at the intersection of Route 10 and 123A to Acworth - the spot where, on October 10, 1912, President Taft took a wrong turn while heading to Marlow on his way to a campaign event in Keene (see our Fall 2019 newsletter).



Marlow Tea Room, Route 10



Lunch Room - Marlow Junction



*Waitresses at the Grantwood Inn
Washington Pond Road*

And there was, notably, the **Grantwood Inn** on Washington Pond Road, which we featured in our Spring/Summer 2022 issue. It was owned by John and Marie Peterson and it ran from 1944 to 1967. Charlie Strickland still raves about their Swedish meatballs!

Jack Strickland recalls going to a place on Route 10 near the Stone Pond Road, during the late 1950s, that was called **Aspen's Restaurant**. We wonder if it might have been in the same building as the **Stone Pond Grill** pictured on this 1952 postcard.

In the mid 1960s Joe Boggart from East Alstead ran a small cafe in the house next to what would later be Marlow's Cafe, and is now Marlow Mini-Storage. And in the early 1980s there was a food truck across Route 10 from the Stone Pond cabins north of the village, run by the owner of the cabins. Bonnie Parker continued the food truck tradition with **Bon's Food Truck** in recent years,



Stone Pond Grill, Route 10

next to what used to be her husband Mark's auto repair shop on Route 10 across from the end of the Old Newport Road.



Bon's Food Truck, Route 10

Prior to Route 10 being reconfigured, Vic May, Sr. had a hotdog stand across from Kenny and Caren Clark's driveway, near Aaron's Specialty. It is said that he made delicious grinders. After the road was completed he moved



Vic's Lunch, Old Newport Road and Route 10

the stand to Telephone Road, but it wasn't open very long in that location. There was also a **Vic's Lunch** during the 1980s at the site that would later become Marlow's Cafe.

Many present residents remember that Mother McGowan, who lived in a mobile home on Cameron Lane, ran a restaurant called **Mother's Tasty Meals** in what used to be the old Telephone Road cider mill. Mother also ran a small restaurant in the 1960s at the Christmas Trees Inn. In the 1970s Roger and Marie Champagne also operated a restaurant at the inn, which lasted only a short time.

Marlow's Cafe, which advertised on its tee-shirts that it was "conveniently located in the middle of nowhere", ran under various owners in the 1990s and 2000s. It was located in the building at the end of Old Newport Road that is now part of the Marlow Mini-Storage. They even served pizza, advertising, "No more 20 minute drive to get a cold pizza home!"



Mother's Tasty Meals, Telephone Road



*Marlow's Cafe, Old Newport Road and Route 10
Photo by Peter Eisenstadter*

At the same time, the **Marlow Grocery**, then owned by Bonnie Parker, sold ice cream and take-out food. Employees of PC Connection, then in full force at the Christmas Trees Inn and the Mill, were regular customers during lunch breaks.

Today we are very fortunate to have **Aaron's Specialty**, which is perched on a rise just south of the village. It was established by the Clark family, and is named after Caren Clark's late brother Aaron Dimlich, who created the iconic Aaron's Pepper Jelly. In 2006 they built a commercial kitchen to make the jelly, and the business has been growing ever since. Aaron's Specialty thoroughly lives up to the words on its newly installed sign: "Good Food, Cool Ice Cream, Good People".

We would be delighted to hear from our readers about their "dining reminiscences", or about any eateries we might have missed.



Marlow Grocery, Route 10



Aaron's Specialty, Route 10 - September 2019

* Much information was obtained from labels used at a 2012 tavern exhibit at the Historical Society of Cheshire County in Keene.

** School District #7 closed in 1913 and merged with District #4; the building was sold to Roy Forbes in 1928. According to the property assessment record, the home that is currently on the site (6 Stone Pond Road) was built in 1980 and therefore is not the old Schoolhouse #7 building.

WINTER HEARSE

Elgin Jones wrote that Marlow's Hearse House was built in 1856, and eventually moved to its present site, across the entrance to the Village Cemetery, "on land purchased from heirs of Herbert Weeks (the Elisha Buss homestead)". In our Winter 2021 newsletter we wrote about the Hearse House, and mentioned that the Winter and Summer hearses were moved to a more protected environment inside the Murray Hall museum.

The Summer hearse was in relatively good condition, and only required a thorough cleaning. The Winter hearse, sadly, had suffered more deterioration. The curtains, for example, were literally crumbling to dust, and were replaced by Marcia Levesque, who found material and fringes that look remarkably authentic. The leather seat has yet to be restored. We have contacted several craftsmen, but have not had a positive response. We hope that, by spreading the word through this newsletter, we might find someone willing to tackle the job.



Winter Hearse inside Murray Hall



Charlie Strickland's drum set inside Murray Hall

DANCE HALL DAYS

Local talent provided the music for informal dances held in the Grange Hall (now Murray Hall) during the 1960s. Charlie Strickland was the drummer; Bobby "Turk" Davis (Tony Davis' uncle) played the organ and sang. Others joined in at various times: Clark Foss on the fiddle, Dale Wilson on the banjo; even members of a rock group from Holliston, Massachusetts. Turk's favorite songs were the Auctioneer Song and Woolly Bully! Chet Dimlich worked for the Budweiser distributor in Keene and usually arranged for a keg of beer. Jack Strickland tells us that he and Charles Andrews (Roddy Andrews' grandson) were the only kids around. In the 1970s a more formal group called The Shanty Town Four played actual gigs. Charlie's set of drums is in the Murray Hall museum.

NEW MHS FACEBOOK PAGE

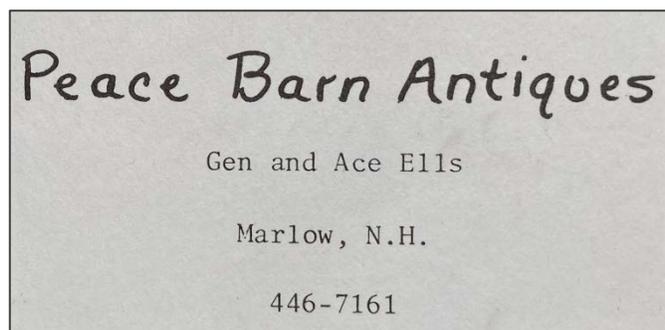
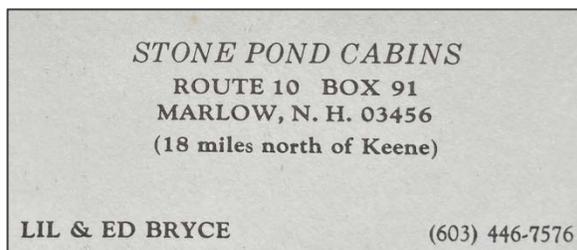
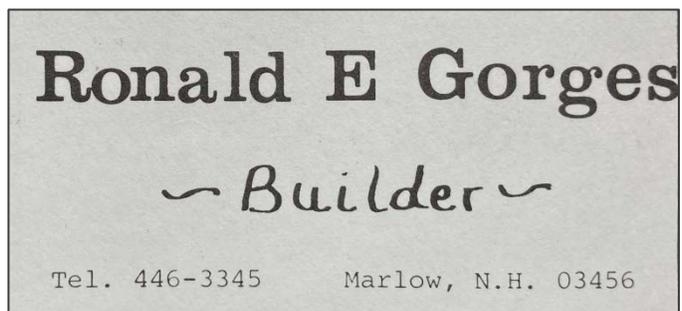
In June 2023, the Marlow Historical Society launched a new Facebook page, to replace the now inoperative page started by Loisanne Foster in October 2010. Our goal is to implement the Society's mission **to preserve and illuminate Marlow history**. Loisanne, who passed away on January 18, 2019, formulated this concise, yet eloquent, mission statement and made it her personal calling. She was a member of the Historical Society for many years, and served on its board with distinction. Before creating the Facebook page she moderated the Society's Online Forum, posting information and responding to inquiries. A brilliant genealogist, she welcomed descendants of Marlow families and led them on tours of the cemeteries and old homesteads. We aim to further the Society's mission, and to share Marlow's many stories as Loisanne did so well.

You can find our page and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MarlowNHHistoricalSociety. We look forward to connecting with you there!



MARLOW BUSY BODIES

During the 1980s Marlow had a 4-H Photography Club called the "Marlow Busy Bodies". They put out a calendar entitled "*to make the best better*". It featured photos by Gerry Plotts, Kelli Strickland, Jennifer Pratt, Helen Clark, Carol Clark, Matthew Bissell, Dennis Clark, and Steven Gutkowski, as well as advertisements from long-gone local businesses, such as *Champagne's Christmas Trees Inn*, *Peace Barn Antiques*, *Ronald E. Gorges - Builder*, and *Beth's Babysitting Service*. You can see the calendar in our museum.



PERSONAL WAR SKETCHES

In previous newsletters we have written about the book *Personal War Sketches*, which was donated in 1893 by the Honorable James Burnap to the Henry Stevens Post #86, local affiliate of the Grand Army of the Republic. Inside are handwritten sketches about eighteen Civil War veterans, most of whom were from Marlow. The sketches have been transcribed by Tracy Messer to make them legible and available to all without handling the book itself. We will proceed with the remaining sketches as space allows.

Personal Sketch of Comrade Franklin G. Nevers

Who was born the Third day of February, Anno Domini 1843, in Charlestown, County of Sullivan, State of New Hampshire.

Comrade Nevers entered the service August 13th 1862 by enlisting at Concord, NH in Company C, 9th Regiment, New Hampshire Volunteer [Infantry]. Participated in the Battles of South Mountain, Antietam, Wilderness, Fredericksburg, Weldon Railroad, Poplar Grove and Petersburg, and escaped without a wound. He was for a time in the Regimental Hospital on account of sickness.

He was taken prisoner August 30, 1864 and confined in the Salisbury, North Carolina prison leaving the prison March 2, 1865. He was discharged at Concord, N.H. March 2, 1865 by reason of sickness, having served 2 years, 6 months and 19 days.

His most intimate comrades in the service were George Wakefield, Charley Murphy, Samuel Towne, Charles Mann, William Rice, Ai R. Short, and John H. Rugg.

I certify that the Sketch of my War Service as above written is true as I verily believe.

We certify that Comrade Franklin G. Nevers joined Henry H. Stevens Post No. 86, Department of New Hampshire, January 28th 1893.

Ezra G. Huntley , Adjutant, Commander

♪♪ DOWN BY THE OLD DOWNING MILL STREAM ♪♪

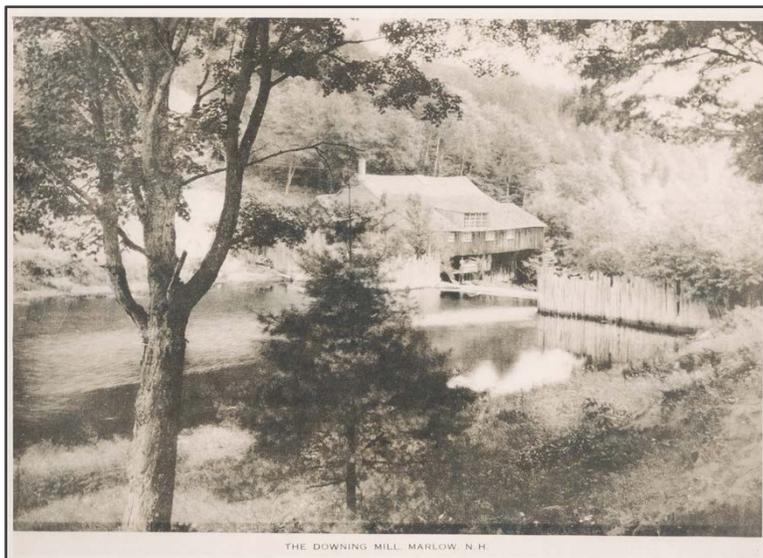
In the chapter on Mills of his *History of Marlow N.H.* Elgin Jones wrote: *In 1840 James Downing built the mill ever since known as the "Downing Mill", since, with the exception of a few years in the 1860s it was always owned by the Downings. Here the roadway formed a part of the dam until 1891 when the highway was changed to the present location. Albert and George Downing became owners.... and soon after installed a circular saw and a planer. This mill is the last to use the power furnished by the Ashuelot in Marlow.*"

Our Winter 2021 newsletter featured an 1843 letter from Ellen Downing to Heman Chase, in which she mentions the old saw blade from the mill, expressing her relief that it was safe in the Alstead Historical Society museum.*

We happen to have in our museum collection a photo of the old Downing sawmill. The caption says that the mill "*is the twenty-second in Stedman series of Old New England Mills.*" We had no clue what that meant. Following the advice of our friend and fellow historian Margaret Chase Perry, we contacted Brian Nelson Burford, NH State Archivist. He in turn referred us to James L. Garvin, professor at Plymouth State University, and NH State Architectural Historian for 24 years. Mr. Garvin solved the mystery for us.

We have, he wrote, a photogravure of the Downing Mill published by the J.H. Stedman Company of South Braintree, Massachusetts. In the early 20th century, the company published annual calendars, each featuring a picturesque mill of old New England. Researching the term "photogravure" we learned that the image is not made in a darkroom; rather, the photographer's image is transferred onto a copper plate, which is used to print or engrave the image with ink.

We'd like to find out the year that the Stedman calendar featured the Downing Mill, and perhaps to actually find a copy of the calendar itself. However, even with the help of a gracious librarian from the Massachusetts Historical Society, we have not been able to contact anyone from the Braintree Historical Society, or find any relevant information about J.H. Stedman, let alone their calendars. Perhaps one of our readers might don a deerstalker hat and follow the trail.



THE DOWNING MILL, MARLOW, N. H.

* The saw blade was later donated to the Marlow Historical Society.



Marlow Historical Society
 Founded in 1976

President - vacant
Vice President - vacant
Secretary - Patty Little
Treasurer - Pat Strickland

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

We are honored to be able to participate in the **Historical Society of Cheshire County's** exhibit entitled "Signs of the Times", which will be in place at the Society from **October 2023 to January 2024**. The exhibit will feature signs used in the region over the last 200 years, showing how they have gradually changed over time with advances in technology.

Of the wonderful old signs in our Murray Hall Museum, some rough-hewn or with peeling paint, two were chosen: the one for Marlow's Cafe, our now-gone eatery, and a directional sign which past resident Bill Brady chanced upon and donated to our Society.

