

MHS Newsletter

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

Spring/Summer 2020

A SCAN OF MARLOW'S MEDICAL HISTORY

by M. Baril

Some of you might wonder about the inscription **STEVENS - 1843** on the granite lintel above the front doorway of the large brick house on Forest Road. It was **Dr. Thomas Jefferson Stevens** - esteemed town doctor who came to Marlow Hill in 1829 and down to "the Plains" in 1838 - who had the house built in 1843. An article by Marjorie Whalen Smith in the July 4, 1999 *Sunday Sentinel* mentions that when the house was being constructed "the younger people, as they passed by, wondered how any man could ever acquire sufficient wealth to build a brick dwelling of that size."

Dr. Stevens was only the third physician to practice in Marlow. **Dr. Benjamin Hazelton** was the first, shortly after the Revolution, and he was succeeded by **Dr. Isaac Baker**, who had been his student. Dr. Baker's practice continued until his death in 1847. He was succeeded by Dr. Stevens, his son-in law. It was once said that the reason there have been so few practicing physicians is because of "the lifegiving qualities of Marlow air".

There's a funny story about Dr. Stevens' arrival in town that was published in his son's memoir "Revelations of a Boston Physician" which is in our Marlow library. The doctor reminisced:

"In 1845 I moved into Charlestown from the little hilly town of Marlow NH, where I first began practice after graduation. The inhabitants of that town were so healthy and so few, that a doctor, a lawyer, and a grave-digger were the only ones likely to become paupers, and hence they were obliged to seek other fields. I remember the first time I entered that town, that, ignorant of the population and area, I requested the stage-driver to put me down in the most thickly-settled part. 'There is no thickly settled part', he remonstrated. 'No matter', I returned, 'put me down in the most thickly-settled part you know'. 'Very well', he said, dryly.

It was towards evening, and I could not well make out the lay of the land; but he finally put me down in a desolate spot and set my trunk on the ground. 'What's this?', said I, expecting to see a town or a village. 'This', he remarked, with a scarcely perceptible smile, 'this is the graveyard, and is the most thickly-settled part of the town'."

In 1844, shortly after his brick house was built, Dr. Stevens sold it, and his practice, to **Dr. Reuben Hatch** and moved to Charlestown MA. Dr. Hatch was born in Alstead in 1787 and attended Dartmouth College. In 1850, Dr. Hatch in turn sold the house to 27 year old **Dr. Marshall Perkins**, who had graduated at the top of his class from Cambridge Medical College.

Dr. Perkins became Marlow's fifth physician. He married Harriet Adelaide Fiske, daughter of Amos Flagg Fiske, the town's leading merchant,* and they made their home in the house that bore the name STEVENS.

During his practice Dr. Perkins fought the typhoid epidemic of 1856, which was especially severe in Gilsum, Marlow and Stoddard. According to our Marlow History, the young physician, only four years out of school, "fought courageously and successfully the dread disease." In our Winter 2016 newsletter we quote an article by D. R. Proper that reads: "The Marlow physician found quinine, turpentine, brandy and beef tea his principal tools against the disease, and remarked afterwards that faced with another such epidemic he would resort to the same treatment."



During the Civil War, Dr. Perkins left Marlow to serve as assistant surgeon in the 14th Regiment of NH Volunteers.** He died in 1902, but his family continued to own the handsome brick house until 1960.

Dr. Perkins' office, which stood next to his house on Forest Road, was moved to Stoddard and now stands behind Dr. Charles Faulkner's house (see photo) on Route 123.

Fortuitously, considering the "medical tradition" of the house, in 1963 the property was sold to Dr. C. Russell Flink and his wife Helen, as their retirement country home. (Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1) Although the first five principal Marlow physicians were Drs. Hazleton, Baker, Stevens, Hatch and Perkins, the History of Cheshire County mentions others who served for brief periods. **Lyman Brooks** studied and practiced with Dr. Baker. In 1854 **William M. French** located here for 2 years. When Dr. Perkins went off to the Civil War, **Dr. Rockwood G. Mather** took his place, and finally **Dr. A. P. Richardson**, from Walpole, who practiced about one year.

The town's next, and last, physician, **Dr. William Matthews Robb** of Green River, Vermont, was issued a NH license (#463) in 1897.*** A graduate of what is now Johns Hopkins medical school, he married the daughter of Mrs. George Petts, who lived in Marlow, and with his brother Frank opened a sanitarium in what is now the Christmas Trees Inn. Their advertisement read: (see photo)

After two years he moved to Keene and practiced there until 1917, when he was charged with performing abortions. He moved to Boston where he opened a clinic.

In 1923 Dr. Robb was one of the defendants in a sensational case that had all the trappings of a mystery novel, including a headless corpse. You can read all the details in our Marlow History, re-edited in 2002 by then Historical Society president Betty Batchelder.



On December 7 he pleaded guilty to performing abortions; he was sentenced to 5-7 years in prison and his license was revoked on March 14, 1924.*** Upon his early release the citizens of Marlow, who never believed he was guilty of any wrongdoing, petitioned the Cheshire County Medical Board to allow him to practice medicine in this town only, and his license was reinstated on September 8, 1927.***

Charlie Strickland remembers him as a good, kind doctor who used to formulate healing medications from herbs and other natural ingredients. He particularly recalls a salve made from iodine and wintergreen. Charlie also remembers that he was a staunch Republican and couldn't bear to hear the name Franklin Roosevelt!! Dr. Robb continued his limited practice in Marlow until his death in 1944.

Three of the doctors are buried in Marlow:

Dr. Isaac Baker is buried in the West Yard Cemetery, WY572.

Dr. Marshall Perkins is buried in the Village Cemetery, Section 1856, Lot 84, Grave 5.

Dr. William Robb is buried in the Village Cemetery, Section 1905, Lot 67, Grave 1.

See "A Store of Marlow Memories" in our **Spring/Summer 2019 newsletter. Dr. Perkins' sons James and Waldo eventually became merchants like their grandfather.*

***We wrote about Dr. Perkins in our **Summer 2013** newsletter.*

****Our thanks to Penny Taylor, of the NH Office of Professional Licensure and Certification, for getting us this information from a tattered old book still in their possession.*



Personal War Sketches

*This is the fourth transcription by local historian
Tracy W. Messer*

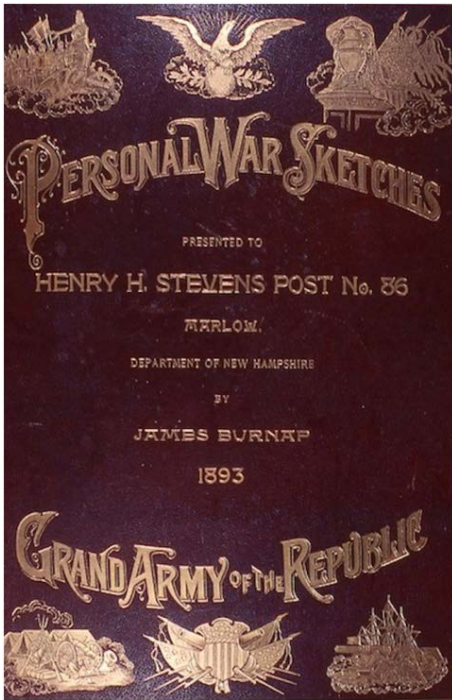
Personal Sketch of Comrade Ezra G. Huntley



Who was born the seventh day of November A.D. 1825 in Marlow, County of Cheshire, State of New Hampshire.

Comrade Huntley entered the service by enlisting in the 18th Regiment, Company A, New Hampshire Volunteers at Concord, New Hampshire, September 13th, 1864. Was mustered September 18th. Left Concord for the seat of war October 1st. Landed at City Point, Virginia, October 5th, 1864. Remained at City Point, with an occasional march to the front, working on fortifications and streets until March 8th, 1865, when the regiment was ordered front. (Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)



Comrade Huntley was appointed Corporal on Color Guard in March. On March 25th, the regiment was ordered into the Battle of Fort Stedman. March 27th, the regiment was ordered into the fortifications on the right of Fort Stedman where it remained until the evacuation of Petersburg, [Virginia], April 2nd & 3rd. Entering Petersburg the morning of the 3rd, was ordered to the Southside Railroad where the regiment remained a short time.

The Regiment embarked at City Point, April 21st, 1865, and arrived at Alexandria, Virginia, April 23rd. April 27th, the regiment marched to Tenleytown. Here Corporal Huntley was appointed to the command of the Prisoner Corps. The headquarters of the regiment was here until its discharge, doing guard duty on 4 ½ Street, Washington, during the trial of Mrs. Surratt and others.

The regiment was mustered out here June 9th, arrived in Concord, [New Hampshire] June 11th, and home June 17th, 1865. Corporal Huntley was not sick a day nor missed a ration when he could get it.

His most intimate companions were **Moses A. Cragin**, J. Ansell Rawson, Manley W. Gasset, and George Ripley.

We certify that comrade [Ezra G. Huntley] joined Henry H. Stevens Post Number 86, Department of New Hampshire, April 26th, 1886. Held offices of Sergeant Major, Commander, Adjutant.

Ezra G. Huntley, Adjutant.

WHEN MARLOW SAW THE LIGHT

A book entitled Predecessors of Public Service Co. of NH, by Roger W. Hunt, traces the evolution of gas and electric power in the Monadnock Region. The Keene Gas Light Company was organized in 1860, when it purchased a gas plant built and operated by Edward Gustine.

In 1901 it became the Keene Gas & Electric Company. Starting in 1909 lines were extended and power was supplied to various towns. Service was extended to Nelson in 1934, Munsonville in 1937, Richmond in 1938, and Stoddard in 1939. Finally, the author states: **“the electric properties of the Watson-Williams Manufacturing Company in Marlow* were purchased in 1939 and central station service was provided over a 6,900 volt line constructed from Gilsun to Marlow.”**

Not that Marlow was “in the dark” before then! Charlie Strickland tells us that Watson-Williams (where Audio Accessories is today) provided steam and hydropower-generated electricity to the central village (roughly from Cross Street to Mill Street) from 1917 to 1939.

He recalls that after the Great Hurricane of 1938 the two town linesmen, Ivan Huntley and Bill McPhail, with everyone else pitching in, had the electric poles up and power back by the next day.

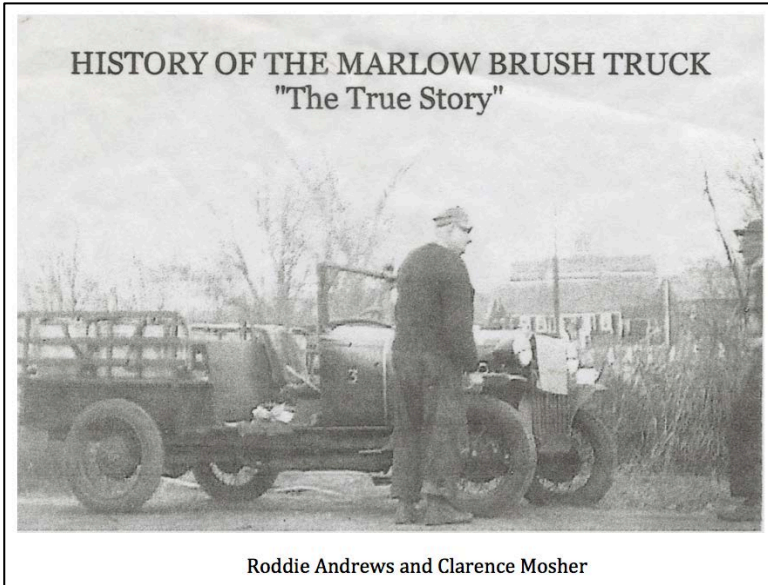
- *Watson Manufacturing was established in Leicester MA in 1842, by Lory Watson. The company made hand cards for the woolen industry, as well as heddles and shuttles. Lory's grandson Walter Watson joined the business in 1890 and the family opened plants in Millbury and Marlow. In 1909 the Watsons merged*



with the J. H. Williams Co. which manufactured similar products for looms. The Leicester and Millbury Public Libraries, and the Millbury Historical Society, have kindly shared information and photos.

- *On August 17, 1961 the Keene Evening Sentinel reported that “Watson-Williams Mfg. Co., formerly of Marlow NH” had filed for bankruptcy.*

TIME TRAVEL WITH CHARLIE



Charlie Strickland was with the Marlow Fire Department for forty years. He also spent nine years as watchman at the Pitcher Mountain Fire Tower in Stoddard. He says this is "the true story" about the Marlow Brush Truck:

"When the boys got home from WWII we built the brush truck all with donations of parts and labor. The rig was made to be as light as possible. No water tank. Back packs in the side racks. Shovels, axes, crosscut saw, etc. in the body, including kerosene lanterns in a special place (no flashlights). A set of rope falls and a roll of 1/2" rope which we had to use a couple of times.

The truck was so light that the crew of 5 or 6 men or boys had to walk to the fire to keep the truck going.

{After it was decommissioned} we sold it to Jack Armstrong in White River Jct., Vermont, for his collection of fire trucks."



Charlie remembers two fellows in town who belonged to different political parties. Freeman Newton, who with his brother-in-law Walter Nichols ran the Nichols & Newton Store, was a staunch Democrat. Bill Campbell was a diehard Republican.

When Franklin Roosevelt was running for the presidency against incumbent Herbert Hoover, Freeman and Bill wagered that the one who backed the losing candidate would push the other one in a wheelbarrow all over town. Of course Bill ended up pushing Freeman, (who carried a Roosevelt sign), up and down Marlow streets, to the delight and amusement of all.



Reminiscing about what his father, Berton F. Strickland, did for work as a young man in Marlow, Charlie says that around 1916, when he was just a teenager, he worked at the Jack Lee Mine with some of his friends: Clarence Mosher, Frank Elliot, and Ralph Elliot.

The Jack Lee mine was down a road about half a mile, across from Pam Little's house on Rt. 123. They were a drill team: three sledge hammer operators and one who held the "star drill" in place while the others alternated hitting it with the hammer. They all took turns as the holder. They drilled holes all winter long in preparation for the dynamite guy to come in the spring, and lived in a shack they had built and hauled into the mine. Feldspar was the major product mined. There is still a feldspar crystal on the ceiling of one of the caves that might be the biggest in the world.



Photo Credit: Jim Pecora, Visionary
New England Mineral Museum

Marlow Epidemics - Then and Now

by M. Baril

As Marlow deals with anxiety and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic, I thought it would a source of comfort and inspiration to look back in history at other harrowing times from the town's past.

Writing about them, however, was a challenge. Being away from home and in self isolation made it impossible to go out and do hands-on research. I've therefore appealed to my tried and trusted sources: Elgin Jones, Alan Rumrill and Tracy Messer, for information about three such occasions. This is a collaborative effort.

Elgin Jones mentions the typhoid epidemic of 1856. He writes: "During the time that the people of the village were most seriously afflicted there was scarcely a home that did not have a sick person, in some cases, several. Professional nurses with their ministering care were unknown. It was the testing time of friendship, when the well ones faithfully cared for the sick." Dr. Marshall Perkins was town doctor at the time; you can read about his work in the article about Marlow's Medical History, on page 1 of this newsletter.

From Alan Rumrill comes this data about the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918: "There were many deaths locally. Most of what we know comes from Keene, where the hospital and newspaper were located. The first case was reported on September 16 and the peak came the following month. Schools, stores, churches, and movie theaters were closed. Meetings were banned, people were told to avoid crowds and to observe strict sanitation. The hospital was full two weeks after the outbreak began and a temporary hospital was set up in Fiske Hall at Keene Normal School (now Keene State College). Thousands of cases were reported in the region and 153 people died in Keene." Some of those were most likely residents of neighboring towns who were at the hospital for treatment.

Death records show that Marlow had six deaths from October through December, an unusually high number for a 3 month period.*** (There were only 3 deaths during the entire year of 1919.)

Tracy Messer provided information about 1941, which was perhaps an all-time low point for the town of Marlow. The nation was coming out of the decade-long Great Depression. The town was devastated by a flood in 1936, followed by the Hurricane of '38 that devastated all of New England. By 1940, Marlow's population plummeted to a record low: 288 (lower than in 1790). The United States was on the brink of entering the Second World War. These events were all prologue to an even greater disaster - the Forest Fire of 1941 that burned nearly 25,000 acres. (To make the situation more dire, a measles epidemic was going on during the time of the fire.) The conflagration devastated the town's principal economy, timber, and left tax payers with the overwhelming burden of paying for the costs of fighting the fire.

Throughout these calamities the true character of our citizens has been revealed in acts of courage and generosity - from caring for sick relatives to plunging into fires to rescue families and properties.

The town has now come together in so many ways during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic when people are working from home, or not working at all, and students are engaged in remote, online learning for their schooling. The Marlow Neighborhood Food Group - a joint effort by the Church, Odd Fellows, Perkins Academy, Feeding Tiny Tummies, Kroka, and the Town of Marlow - operates a food pantry out of the Methodist Chapel. It is well stocked with items including milk, eggs, breads, fresh produce, meat and non-perishable items. It is operated under the guidelines of the CDC; deliveries are available. Some residents are sewing masks for area residents, local hospitals and assisted living centers. A garden initiative is providing seeds and starter plants to encourage people to start a garden this year. The Church is ready to help all residents, and has been streaming its worship on Facebook. Select Board meetings are even being conducted remotely each Monday via the online meeting platform Zoom.

The social media site, Facebook, has proven to be a very helpful way for people to stay connected in a time of social distancing. The Marlow related Facebook groups "I Like Marlow" and "The Marlow NH Post" provide online places for people to share items they have, such as cloth masks or an overabundance of eggs, or ask for things they need assistance with, such as grocery deliveries. They also serve as places for posting announcements, sharing positive stories and photos, and encouraging people to join in activities at home, such as the weekly pantry cooking challenge, a snowman challenge, and even a bingo game.

The photos on the next page illustrate some ways that the town has rallied to face this challenge, lift each other's morale, and celebrate community spirit.

*** **Oct. 12 - Lawrence W. Lowell - age 10**

Oct. 14 - Jennie L. Hatch - age 41

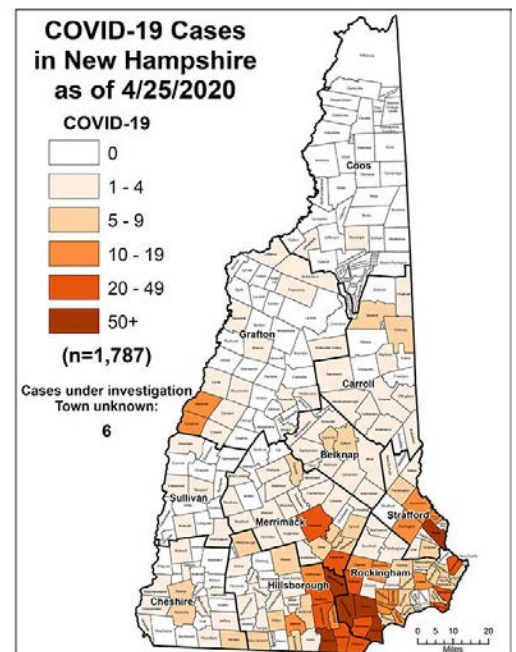
Dec. 12 - Vesta B. Knight - age 66

Dec. 14 - Rockwell F. Craig - age 66

Dec. 15 - James M. Perkins - age 65 - (Dr. Marshall Perkins' son)

Dec. 21 - Fannie A. Booth - age 59

The first three died of influenza. It is interesting that the doctors certifying the deaths were not from Marlow, as the town didn't have its own doctor at the time.



MARLOW IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 - SPRING 2020



The Marlow NH Post >
PUBLIC GROUP · 267 MEMBERS

facebook



I LIKE MARLOW >
PUBLIC GROUP · 1,488 MEMBERS



Marlow United Methodist Church's Video

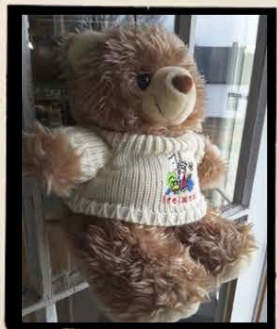
Homemade cloth masks



Family fun - Find the bears on the Marlow Bear Hunt



Weekly Pantry Challenge - use at least 3 items from the food list



Perkins Academy snowman challenge



VICTORIAN MARLOW

The unforgettable Audrey Benson (See our Fall 2018 newsletter), one of the founders of our Historical Society, put together a scrapbook of Marlow memories from the early years to the 1980s. And our dearly missed Loisanne Foster copied every page and made them available at our museum for all to enjoy.

In the scrap book are photographs, clippings, historical memorabilia, and also many bits of ephemera, such as dance cards and calling cards - tiny, fragile, and vibrant mementos of special Marlow people from a time gone by.

In her "Calling Cards and the Etiquette of Paying Calls", Michelle Hoppe says that "by the beginning of the 19th century calling cards were an essential part of introductions, invitations and visits". Originating in Victorian era Europe, and reflecting the sentimentality and formality of that time, they also played a role in our small town.

Most of Marlow's calling cards were about one inch wide and 1 1/2 inches long. Loisanne Foster wrote: "Rules for their use were elaborate, and knowledge of their correct use played a role in social distinctions somewhat in the same way that, in some circles, grammar is still thought to today." In the heyday of calling cards they depicted flowers, birds, castles, or a delicate feminine hand - all in vivid hues. In the twentieth century they became plainer and less colorful.

The dance cards, from balls at the Forest Inn during the 1880s, portray cherubs, flowers, doves, dragonflies - all in the same bright colors. The cards had a small pencil and cord, and the lady would attach it to her gown or wrist. Inside were spaces with the type of dance, and for the names of prospective partners to be written in. One of the cards lists "Floor Managers" and "Aids" - all women - who probably ensured propriety and good etiquette. It is amazing that such an Old World practice made it as far into the New World as rural Marlow.



READERS ADD TO THE NARRATIVE

After reading the articles on the **Way family and Farley Ink Mfg.** in our Fall 2019 newsletter, **Dane Way** wrote: "Bethuel Farley married Hannah Way, daughter of Wells Way and Deliverance Gale. Wells' parents were Daniel Way and Ruth Moor." {who are buried in the West Yard Cemetery}. "That makes Bethuel and Hannah my 5th Great Aunt and Uncle!"

Emily Bomely has fond memories of **Annie and Roy Huntley** {see article on the **History of the Town Library** in our Fall 2019 newsletter}. She emailed: "My parents rented the other half of the Huntley house for many years. I would just open the hall door and visit with Mrs. Huntley. She was like a grandmother to me. For my 10th birthday they gave me Little Women. I still have the book with Mrs. Huntley's inscription. I remember the nephews {Allan and Bill Abbott} coming; we all looked forward to that. When Mr. Huntley died it was a sad time. He had been sick for quite a while. I can remember visiting Mrs. Huntley hoping I could cheer her up."

"Their attic was full of vintage clothes. Annie would let us look through the clothing to make our picks for Old Home Day. Susan {Susan Rock} and I wore the dresses on the Christmas Tree Inn float in 1959. I often wonder whatever happened to the iron, full-size Dalmatian statue that was on the Huntleys' front lawn....."



**Marlow Historical Society
Founded in 1976**

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Vice President - Joanne Thomas
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Treasurer - Pat Strickland**

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Sharon Spalluto
Ed Thomas**

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marlow-historical-society.php*

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AROUND THE OLD ELM TREE

The logo on Marlow tee shirts and caps depicts the legendary Giffin Elm.



Our Marlow History makes reference to it at various times, often capitalizing it; obviously it was a notable landmark. On Page 97 it reads that “Stephen Tuttle, with others, asked for a road from Keene Road at the Elm Tree direct to their neighborhood.”

On Page 103 it states that after the first District No. 4 schoolhouse burned “it was re-built between old house and the old Giffin Elm”. On Page 163 it mentions that Lemuel Miller lived near the old elm. And on Page 168: “House by old elm built by Patrick Giffin.”

Patrick Giffin and his family arrived in Marlow from Deering, NH in 1793. He was a well-respected, hard-working farmer. He is buried in Marlow Village Cemetery. His descendant, Reuben Giffin, established the Whippoorwill Mill at the junction of Gee Brook and the Ashuelot River. Another descendant, John Giffin, became a banker and fuel merchant in Keene. Giffin Street is named after him and the storage tower between Gilbo Ave. and Emerald St. was built and used by him.

Some years ago, while researching the Marlow school districts, a group of Historical Society members, led by then president Betty Batchelder, explored the area on the Baine Road where schoolhouse No. 4 once stood, and found what might have been the remains of the trunk of the old Giffin Elm.