The CHS’s Great Benefactors

The Woodward and Waterman Families

Many thoughtful people have funded the building, protection and enhancement of the CHS collection, as well as our educational programming, over our 193-year history. Two families in one genealogical tree stand out among the CHS’s greatest benefactors.

The story begins with Ashbel Woodward, M.D., born in Willington, CT, in 1804. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1829, and practiced medicine in Franklin and Norwich, CT. Ashbel joined the Connecticut Historical Society in 1866, became a CHS Vice President in 1870, and remained so until his death in 1885. He and his wife, Emeline Bicknell, had three sons, including Patrick.

Patrick Woodward was born in Franklin, CT, in 1833 and graduated from Yale in 1855. Patrick joined the CHS in 1864, two years before his father, and served on its Committee on Monthly Papers until 1908. He married Mary (Abbe) Smith in 1867 and they had two children, Helen and Charles.

Helen Woodward was born in 1868, and married Rev. Stephen Granberry in 1892. Their only child, Helen Granberry, was born in 1893. Helen Granberry would eventually marry Edgar Francis Waterman, her Uncle Charles Woodward’s friend and classmate from Trinity College.

Charles Guilford Woodward was born in Hartford in 1876, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College in 1898, and his Master of Arts degree there in 1901, in both instances graduating with classmate Edgar Francis Waterman. He continued graduate studies at Columbia University before joining the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, now known as Cigna, where he became Financial Secretary in 1911 and Vice President in 1924. A year later he retired from active duty, though remained associated with the company until his death in 1950. An expert on railroad investments, Charles served as an advisor or director for many railroad companies, as well as President of the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad Company, and the New London Northern.

Charles took his father’s seat on the Connecticut Historical Society’s Committee on Monthly Papers in 1909 and served on that body for 35 years. In 1928, Charles also joined the CHS Finance Committee, and, in 1939, helped form an Endowment Committee, which CHS President Edgar F. Waterman chaired. In 1942, Charles became a Vice President of the CHS, and continued his service to the CHS through to his death.

Charles was a generous benefactor throughout his life, and at his passing left to the CHS “Indian relics” originally belonging to his grandfather, Ashbel; his Woodward family and corporate papers; and a financial
bequest. He also established a perpetual trust for charities including the CHS, and a trust for his only niece, Helen Granberry Waterman, and her daughters – his grandnieces. Upon the death of the last of his four grandnieces in 2017, the entirety of that family trust was added to his original charitable trust, today benefitting twenty charitable organizations in perpetuity, including the CHS. In honor of Mr. Woodward’s legacy, the CHS will launch the annual Charles G. Woodward Lecture Series in 2019.

Edgar F. Waterman was born in Tarrytown, NY, in 1875 to Edgar and Lucy Sturges Ely Waterman. With his friend, Charles Woodward, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity College in 1898 and his Master of Arts degree there in 1901. He practiced law in New York City for several years, then, in 1906, became Assistant Treasurer and a Trustee of Trinity College, and retired as Treasurer in 1928. He and Helen Granberry Waterman had daughters Helen, Lucy, Mary, and Marjorie.

Edgar became a Life Member of the CHS in 1903, the CHS Auditor in 1908, and served in that role for 20 years. In 1934, he became the President of the CHS, a position he held through 1953. He founded the CHS Endowment Committee in 1939, and remained active with that committee until his death in 1972.

The Watermans’ youngest daughter, Marjorie Waterman McMaster joined the staff of the CHS library in 1949 and oversaw the growth of the genealogy collection, a passion she shared with her father. It was Marjorie’s fondest dream to honor her father’s 68 years of CHS volunteer service, and today, the Edgar F. Waterman Research Center at the CHS memorializes his legacy.

Helen Granberry Waterman created trusts for her two unmarried daughters. When the last living daughter passed away recently, the CHS received a very significant endowment gift from Helen Granberry Waterman’s trust.

An astounding 20 percent of all current CHS investments originated from the generosity of Charles Guilford Woodward and the Waterman family. The CHS and Connecticut history are forever indebted to the Woodward and Waterman families for their extraordinary gifts of time, talents, and treasure. Without these families, the CHS would not be the exceptionally stable and productive organization it is today.

Photos:

Opposite page - Charles Guilford Woodward, 1876 - 1950

Above (left to right) - Helen Granberry Waterman, Edgar F. Waterman, and Marjorie Waterman McMaster