"A city of vivid contrasts": Antimodernity and modernity at the Poland Spring Resort, 1860-1900

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University of New Hampshire, Durham

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"A CITY OF VIVID CONTRASTS": ANTIMODERNITY AND MODERNITY AT THE POLAND SPRING RESORT, 1860-1900

BY

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Bachelor of Arts, Bates College, 1984
Master of Arts, University of Southern Maine, 1991

DISSERTATION

Volume I
Chapters I-IV

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in

History

May 1997
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ABSTRACT

"A CITY OF VIVID CONTRASTS": ANTIMODERNITY AND MODERNITY AT THE POLAND SPRING RESORT, 1860-1900

by

David Lee Richards
University of New Hampshire, May 1997

Lucy E. Salyer, Associate Professor of History
Dissertation Director

This cultural history examines the interplay between antimodernity and modernity that transformed a country inn located in Poland Spring, Maine, into a world-renowned "summer city" during the late nineteenth century. Part exclusive club, colonial homestead, social mecca, therapeutic spa, pastoral farm, natural Eden, recreational playground, and cultured city, the site combined the nostalgia and natural beauty associated with traditional rural society and the affluence and amenities expected of contemporary urban society. The "city of vivid contrasts" created at Poland Spring typified the power of Gilded-Age culture to pave the way for the transition to modernity by appealing to the ameliorative influence of antimodernity.

By focusing on the interconnectedness of these two worldviews, this study offers a synthesis of Gilded-Age culture. It demonstrates how the colonial revival, arts and crafts, social purity, country life, back-to-nature, strenuous life,
and city beautiful movements, as well as transportation, leisure, and consumer revolutions, interacted to shape the human, built, and natural environments at Poland Spring. In addition, viewing the resort landscape as the product of a complex environmental vision links it to other popular middle landscapes of the era such as rural cemeteries, urban parks, and garden suburbs. Ultimately, however, the significance of this work lies in the evidence it provides that the resort reconciled visitors to the changes wrought by industrialization and urbanization during the late nineteenth century by creating an idealized environment that affirmed their social status, legitimated their desire for leisure, satiated their need to consume, and revitalized their faith in progress.
INTRODUCTION: FROM COUNTRY FARM TO SUMMER CITY

In 1860 a reporter for the Lewiston Falls Journal described Hiram Ricker's country farm in Poland Spring, Maine, as a place that bespoke of the "good old times." By 1901 a promotional pamphlet published by Hiram Ricker and Sons referred to the same site as a "summer city." Far from a linear progression, the transformation from farm to city was marked instead by a conscious effort to create an ideal hybrid environment that eventually became known as the "city of vivid contrasts." Along the way, the Poland Spring resort functioned as part exclusive club, colonial homestead, social mecca, therapeutic spa, pastoral farm, natural Eden, recreational playground, and cultured city. The appealing middle landscape fashioned out of these various elements achieved its

"A Trip to Poland and the Mineral Spring," Lewiston Falls Journal, 20 July 1860; Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1901), unpaginated; "Many Vivid Contrasts," Hill-Top, 29 July 1922, 3.

popularity because it successfully combined both the anti-
modern past associated with the countryside and the modern 
present centered in cities.²

²Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the 
Pastoral Ideal in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 
1964), 3-33, 354-65; J. Ellis Voss, "Summer Resort: An 
Ecological Analysis of a Satellite Community" (Ph. D., diss., 
University of Pennsylvania, 1941), 139; Charles E. Funnell, By 
the Beautiful Sea: The Rise and High Times of That Great 
American Resort, Atlantic City (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 
1975), 77, 119-41; Andrea Rebek, "The Selling of Vermont: 
From Agriculture to Tourism, 1860-1910," Vermont History 44 
Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century (New York: 
Oxford University Press, 1989), 49, 64-5; Stuart M. Blumin, 
The Short Season of Sharon Springs: Portrait of Another New 
York, in collaboration with Deborah Adelman Blumin (Ithaca and 

The interpretive fiction of "middle landscape" owes its 
existence to Leo Marx. He has argued that reconciling 
technological fact and rural myth, or in his metaphorical lan-
guage, finding a place for the machine in the garden, long 
posed a challenge to a culture committed at least as intently 
to material progress as to pastoral perfection. Resolution of 
the conflict called for a "complex pastoralism" able to 
accommodate both modern reality and romantic nostalgia. 
Located between rural primitiveness and urban overciviliza-
tion, the middle landscape promised an Arcadian compromise.

Several studies have emphasized the "middleness" of the 
resort environment. As far back as 1941, Voss concluded that 
the resort town of Ocean City, New Jersey, "being neither 
urban nor rural, though partaking of the nature of each," was 
"a hybrid community." Moving forward in time several decades 
and turning his attention up the coast of New Jersey a few 
miles, Funnell portrayed Atlantic City as a "middle ground" 
that combined pastoral order and serenity with urban variety 
and excitement. Studying tourism in a destination farther 
afield, Rebek attributed the appeal of Vermont during the late 
nineteenth century to the domesticated middle landscapes that 
waited visitors to the state. Similarly, Sears ascribed the 
attractiveness of the regions surrounding the Hudson and 
Connecticut Rivers to the middle landscapes found there. 
Finally, Blumin tied the popularity of the spa located in 
Sharon Springs, New York, to a middle landscape that presented 
a gently civilized sampling of nature to guests.
Use of the city metaphor was revealing. Although established in response to the profound social and cultural changes that accompanied the processes of modernization — industrialization, immigration, and urbanization — the resort served as more than a place to escape the problems of urban reality. In effect, it represented the effort to create an idealized urban setting — one that blurred the past and the present, balanced tradition and progress, blended antimodernity and modernity, and reconciled the values of country and city. At the "city of vivid contrasts," an air of nostalgia intermingled with an


My analysis of the city metaphor has been guided by the methodology of Rhys Isaac. Beginning from the premise that culture consists of actions laden with symbolism, Isaac has proposed that metaphors frame meaning. He has explained: "The action approach must explicitly take into account some of the ways in which culture is composed of interlocking sets of paradigms, or metaphors, that shape participants' perceptions by locating diverse forms of action on more or less coherent maps of experience." Likewise, Bender has contended that metaphors map social reality. In the case of Poland Spring, interpreting the recurring metaphors of the city, progress, nobility, purity, and paradise is key to understanding the actions of the various actors on the hilltop.


The amalgamation of these contrasting elements reflected what Cmiel has termed "the messiness that was the reality of actual history." In his reevaluation of *The Search for Order,* Cmiel has warned "that modernization theory made tradition and modernity far too neatly packaged."
ambience of contemporaneity; natural beauty complemented cultural refinement; and pastoralism and romanticism merged with modernism. In this respect, Poland Spring was a manifestation of what Thomas Bender has termed the "complex environmental vision" that with continual refocusing throughout the nineteenth century, gradually led toward an urban vision. Acting like a flywheel on the wheels of progress,  

"The distinctions between modern (a temporal designation), modernity (a cluster of cultural characteristics), modernism (a system of intellectual beliefs), and modernization (an economic process) are set forth in Daniel Joseph Singal, "Towards a Definition of American Modernism," American Quarterly 39 (Spring 1987): 7-26.  

Bender, Toward an Urban Vision, x-xi, 73-92.  

Building on the notion that landscapes are composites reflecting multiple cultural values, Bender has proposed that a "complex environmental vision" came into focus during the nineteenth century as industrialism took firm root in cities. The new mind-set merged old agrarian ideals about community and nature with new urban experiences. The result was a variety of real and imagined middle landscapes that stood as counterpoises to cityscapes. Discussing the appeal of this dual vision, Bender has written:  

The rural cemetery, the park, the landscape painting, the vacation, the rural walk, and the romantic imagination all offered the attractions of rural life without any of its liabilities: the beauty and freedom of the country without the arduous labor, the loneliness, or the cultural poverty of farm life.  

The cumulative effect of these complex environments was to usher in urbanization by tempering it with doses of rural nostalgia and natural beauty.  

Bender has distinguished his work from Leo Marx's in two ways. First, he claimed to examine social reality, as well as cultural symbols, in his study. He contrasted this approach to Marx's, which relied primarily on the analysis of writings by elite literary figures. Second, Bender believed that complex environmentalism was a more dynamic concept than Marx's middle landscape and thus, better able to explain the
the contrasts between antimodernity and modernity became more vivid the more urban the vision on the hilltop became.

The vivid contrasts represented many movements, patterns, and trends of Gilded-Age culture. The most obvious characteristics of antimodernity during the era were rampant nostalgia for the past, embodied most significantly in the colonial revival movement, and romantic attachment to nature, giving rise to what Peter J. Schmitt has referred to as the back-to-nature movement. A less clear form of antimodernity was an ambivalent antiurbanism that rejected many of the realities of the modern Riisian city, while continuing to embrace most of the ideals of the city beautiful movement's master work, the White City. A more subtle version of antimodernity manifested itself in the form of escapism. Symptomatic of what T. J. Jackson Lears has described as a pervasive "pattern of evasive rise of the urban-industrial complex, despite the power of the pastoral myth in American culture. In sum, Bender's thesis paid more attention to the reality of the urban future, while Marx's focused on the nostalgia for a pastoral past.

banality," flights from reality could be intellectual as well as physical.\(^7\)


No historian has studied the interplay between antimodernity and modernity at the turn of the century more than Lears. He has proposed that the emphases of the dominant culture shifted during this period from the Protestant values of work, production, and salvation to the therapeutic values of leisure, consumption, and self-fulfillment. In response to "a crisis of cultural authority," precipitated by the increasing economic rationalization of and class and ethnic conflicts within American society, antimodernists sought out authentic experiences. Lears has identified militarism, Progressive reform, popular occultism, depth psychology, the arts and crafts and strenuous life movements, Anglo-Saxon ethnocentrism, literary realism, and medievalism as some of the ways antimodernists attempted "to revitalize elite cultural domination."

The concept of revitalization is central to Lears' argument. Lears has maintained that it was the ability of antimodernists to revitalize bourgeois values that eased the transition to the therapeutic world view. "By denying the dilemmas posed by modernization," he has argued, "the official doctrines provided both a source of escape from unprecedented conflict and a means of legitimizing continued capitalist development in a liberal polity." Lears suggested, in effect, that the process of antimodern revitalization functioned as a safety valve that relieved mounting cultural tensions.

This line of historical analysis acknowledges the ambivalence of antimodernists. Although Lears regarded the group as evaders of reality, he did not dismiss its members as nostalgic escapists. In fact, Lears has noted that antimodernists accommodated more often than challenged the central tenets of modernity. He has noted, for instance, that antimodernists retained their "faith in the beneficence of material progress," in part, because they equated it with moral progress. The ambiguity of their objectives produced such ironic results (or vivid contrasts) as the legitimation of consumer capitalism and bureaucratic rationality, the commodification of authentic experience, and "the mutation of Puritan villages.
The most obvious attributes of modernity were faith in progress and fascination with technology. Acknowledging the late-nineteenth-century cult of progress and materialism, John Higham has argued that a new activism that emerged during the 1890s in response to the stultifying order of urban-industrial life was another distinguishing feature of modern American culture. Coming to grips with material abundance added two other important tenets to the modern mentality -- the legitimacy of consumption and leisure. During the Gilded Age, modern consumers made virtues out of traditional republican vices of luxury and conspicuous display. Likewise, the emergent leisure class elevated recreation and pursuits of pleasure from acts of moral decadence to ones of therapeutic necessity, all in the name of progress.

into luxurious resorts." Most ironically of all, it produced what Lears has termed the antimodern modernist.


10Written amidst the late-nineteenth-century leisure revolution, the seminal study of the subject remains Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions (New York: Macmillan, 1899; reprint, New York:
The closest thing to a manifesto explaining the necessity of the existence of Poland Spring was an editorial published in the resort newspaper, the Hill-Top. Written in 1895, the piece detailed some of the principal perils unleashed by economic modernization. "Toiling and seething masses" coursed through cities. An amorphous "great army," presumably made up of immigrants, invaded and permeated "all Boston." "The crafty plans of the leading spirits of political movements" caught unwary voters in tiny webs. "Great movements of warlike strife" advanced and receded. These concerns, coupled with the daily "comings and goings of the busy world," burdened many urban dwellers.\(^1\)

The resort offered relief from this modern morass. In many ways, the editorial portrayed Poland Spring as the antithesis of the pathological urban environment. "Remote from rails and highways" and cut off from newspapers, letters, 

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\(^{11}\)"Editorial," *Hill-Top*, 14 July 1895, 4.
and telegrams, guests could drink pure water, breathe clean air, eat fine food, converse with congenial companions, walk along shaded avenues, exercise with the golf club, read the Hill-Top, and be as happy as it was possible to be. Venturing into the "wilds of Maine," the paper avowed, would make a visitor feel as if a tremendous weight had been removed.  

Despite promoting the image of the resort as a refuge from modernity, the editorial recognized that travelers to Poland Spring were permanent residents of, as well as temporary refugees from the modern world. Acknowledging their engagement with contemporary society, the paper noted that "all eagerly seek the daily news" from the far away cities. It gave assurance that from the hilltop sentinel, guests would be able to keep track of distant affairs as if they were happening "in the valley below." "The hum of voices [and] the tread of hurrying feet" remained within earshot; the movements of immigrants, unions, and political machines remained within sight; the urban scene remained under the vigilant surveillance of the urban elite. 

The editorial's concern with the activities of the world beyond the hilltop suggests that Poland Spring was more than a bastion of escapist antimodernism and that tourists had more on their minds than the hedonistic pursuit of good times. Travelers could leave cities, but they could neither forget 

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.}\]
nor ignore the profound changes taking place all around them. Modernization, after all, had generated the very abundance of wealth, goods, status, and leisure that provided the rising middle class with a new group identity and the wherewithal to travel, in addition to the new worries identified by the Hill-Top. Patrons journeyed to Poland Spring in search of a setting that would allow them to enjoy the benefits of modernity by quarantining them from its unpleasant mutations.

Because nineteenth-century Americans traveled for so many reasons, historians have assigned many meanings to nineteenth-century tourism. Two interpretations, however, have predominated -- tourism as a search for identity and as a means of escape. According to the former view, tourism contributed to the development of class, national, and regional identities. Having the time and resources to vacation became one of the distinguishing characteristics of the American leisure class. In addition to staking out its social identity through travel, American tourists also contributed to the formation of a national identity through their choices of vacation destinations. Where once aspiring

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Demars has identified the following major explanations of tourism: the imitation of European travelers, allure of romanticism, striving for status, desire for escape, pursuit of pleasure, interest in nature, restoration of health, and search for identity."
American aristocrats had to venture to the Continent in search of status, by the latter half of the 1800s they could enjoy accommodations equal to the finest European spas at many resorts in the United States. As more and more travelers opted to see America first, they discovered a homeland endowed with romantic natural attractions rivaling, or even overshadowing, the historical and cultural offerings of Europe.15

Despite the significance of the search for identity to the development of tourism, escape from modernity is the theme that most consistently runs through recent historical works. Many examinations of the topic attribute the rise of resorts to the desire of an urban elite to escape crime-ridden,


Sears has argued that tourist attractions played a central role in the formation of a democratic national identity during the nineteenth century. Looking at the role the West played in the development of this cultural identity, Hyde has explained how the distinctive geological features and aesthetic qualities of the region's landscapes helped to distinguish the United States from Europe. In her study of the relationship between tourism and regionalism, Brown has shown how the industry shaped the identity of New England as "an imagined world of pastoral beauty, rural independence, virtuous simplicity, and religious and ethnic homogeneity." Focusing on who bought into this image, Brown also has emphasized the importance of middle-class identity formation to the growth of tourism. Likewise, Schulte has noted that northern New England summer communities reinforced the social values and group identity of middle-class vacationers.
polluted, overcrowded, disease-filled cities. No matter the site investigated -- seaside England; Bar Harbor, Old Orchard Beach, or York Beach in Maine; the White Mountains of New Hampshire; Saratoga or the Catskills in New York; Jekyll Island off the coast of Georgia; or the tourist attractions of the West -- historians have proceeded from the common assumption that tourists traveled to escape modern travails. Given the prevalence of the view, John F. Sears has gone so far as to advance "escape from the anxieties (and comforts) of everyday life" as a timeless appeal of travel.16

This essentially antimodernist interpretation has led some historians to adopt an ironic tone as they have attempted to reconcile escape with the modern revolutions in transportation and communication that made the growth of tourism possible and the modern views toward status, leisure, and

consumption that made it appealing. Dona Brown’s study of New England tourism exemplifies this tendency. In it, Brown has argued that acceptance of tourism as an "antidote to industrial capitalism," even though it was an "integral part" of the new industrial order, was symptomatic of the central "contradiction of middle-class life in capitalist societies." Consequently, Brown has concluded that the ultimate irony of nineteenth-century travel was that "tourists turned away from the allure of the marketplace to travel straight into the arms of the marketplace."17

More than ironic, the complex and ambivalent attitude toward modernity reflected a fundamental dilemma many Gilded-Age tourists faced. They urgently wanted to escape the problems of urban industrial society. Yet when they checked into resort hotels, their cultural baggage overflowed with firmly held, thoroughly modern values. The ability to create an environment that accommodated both their antimodern and modern desires testifies to the power of Gilded-Age culture to obscure, if not absolutely obliterate, the ironies and contradictions so obvious to later generations.

The dichotomy between antimodernity and modernity that strikes present-day observers as contradictory and ironic was, instead, complementary and instrumental to Gilded-Age tourists. The complex combination of an antimodern pastoral vision and a modern urban vision produced a middle landscape

that provided just the right blend of escape and engagement for a leisure class repelled by the pathologies of urban industrial society, yet still steadfastly committed to faith in progress. Poland Spring was popular precisely because the "city of vivid contrasts" re-created two worlds at once. In short, the resort's paradoxes and ironies made it an appealing paradise for the people of progress.18


Uminowicz and Weiss have come the closest to the interpretation of the cultural significance of the Gilded-Age resort environment advanced in this study. In his history of Asbury Park, New Jersey, Uminowicz has written that the resort community there "was built on the desires for both flight and progress." He has explained:

It was a place of escape for the middle class from unsavory aspects of city life and also from those elements of the urban population they regarded as disreputable. As an experiment in urban planning [sic], it was also a community undoubtedly committed to progress.

Hence, Uminowicz has described the resort as an antidote to civilization that simultaneously attempted to create "an ideal urban environment."

In her history of the camp meeting grounds constructed on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, during the mid nineteenth century, Weiss has detailed a similarly complex middle landscape. The sites, she has contended, functioned both as retreats from the city and as fantasy cities. Like the city by the sea described by Uminowicz, the city in the woods drew upon romantic nature to shield campers from the prosaic world, while still offering them access to the amenities of modern culture.
Progress, above all else, was the mantra of the Gilded Age, and with good reason. Seemingly everywhere Americans looked, they saw more signs of material advancement — signs that scribes and orators unquestioningly accepted and enthusiastically chronicled as progress. For Georgia Drew Merrill, the multiplying production of shoe factories, textile mills, and paper companies in Androscoggin County, Maine, demonstrated that it was one of the "most progressive of counties" in the state. For W. A. Ferguson, "rapid and beautiful growth" and "stirring manufacturing activity" provided ample evidence that the county's legal center, Auburn, was "a city of energy and progress." For Richard Herndon, the legal careers of local attorneys William Newell and George Wing qualified them as "men of progress." For another of Maine's men of progress, Congressman Nelson F. Dingley, Jr., the expansion of rail mileage was proof of national progress. Speaking at the town of Poland's centennial celebration in 1895, Dingley marveled that a mere twenty-three miles of track in 1830 had grown six decades later into a rail system of 180,000 miles that gridironed the nation.19

Indeed, railroads led the vanguard of progress during the nineteenth century. The expanding transportation infrastructure not only facilitated the development of the tourist industry, it also made possible a rise in industrial production. Railroads hauled raw materials to and finished products from the nation's shoe, textile, and steel factories. While the population of the United States grew by over ninety percent between 1870 and 1900, output in these three leading industries grew two-and-a-half to ninefold.20

Progress touched Maine, too. As track mileage in the state increased from 472 in 1861 to 1356 in 1889, so, too, did industrial production. In the thriving manufacturing city of Lewiston, nine companies operated fifteen textile mills that employed thousands of workers. Across the Androscoggin River in Auburn, laborers in twelve shoe factories turned out over

Bert M. Fernald and Hiram W. Ricker (Poland, ME: Ricker, Fernald & Ricker, 1896), 30.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US Population</td>
<td>38,558,371</td>
<td>76,303,387</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles of Rail</td>
<td>53,232</td>
<td>194,475</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yards of Cotton Textiles</td>
<td>512,737,975</td>
<td>4,509,750,616</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pairs of Boots and Shoes</td>
<td>80,627,244</td>
<td>219,235,419</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tons of Iron and Steel</td>
<td>3,263,585</td>
<td>29,507,860</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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thirteen million pairs of shoes and boots in 1890, more than a twentyfold increase over the production total at the end of the Civil War. Further up the Androscoggin and along one of its tributaries, the Little Androscoggin, the Maine paper industry flourished in Rumford and Mechanic Falls. In 1890 the five mills of the Poland Paper Company manufactured fifteen tons of paper each day, far exceeding the one-ton output of the lone Eagle Paper Mill in 1851.\textsuperscript{21}

The boost in industrial output was also the result of an expanding labor force. The prospect of employment swelled cities with migrants from the countryside and immigrants from abroad. As a consequence, the population of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia doubled and tripled between 1860 and 1900, while in Chicago it multiplied over fifteenfold. Much of this growth resulted from foreign immigration. Between the elections of Presidents Lincoln and McKinley, more than fourteen million people came to the United States. According to the twelfth census, about one-third of the nation's population in 1900 was either foreign born or the offspring of immigrant parents.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21}Merrill, ed., \textit{History of Androscoggin County}, 388-92, 629-34, 755; Poole and Poole, \textit{History of Poland}, 91-3, 143.

In Maine urban growth was equally dramatic. The population of cities such as Portland, Lewiston, and Auburn soared. In 1860 Portland contained 26,341 residents, Lewiston 7,424, and Auburn 4,022; by 1900 the respective figures were 50,145, 23,761, and 12,951. As elsewhere in the industrial Northeast, foreign immigrants accounted for much of the increase. Addressing the situation in Androscoggin County, Crosby S. Noyes, a regular patron of the Poland Spring resort, observed in 1904 that "the foreign element began to come in with the advent of the great manufacturing establishments at Lewiston." A massive migration from the Canadian province of Quebec added to the city, whose population was nearly forty percent foreign born in 1900, a distinctively Franco-America cultural influence.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population 1860</th>
<th>Population 1900</th>
<th>Percentage Native</th>
<th>Percentage Foreign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>177,840</td>
<td>560,892</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1,080,330</td>
<td>3,437,202</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>565,529</td>
<td>1,293,697</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>109,260</td>
<td>1,698,575</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population 1900</th>
<th>Percentage Native</th>
<th>Percentage Foreign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>76,303,387</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Born</td>
<td>10,460,085</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Born w/Foreign Parents</td>
<td>15,687,322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1890 Henry and George Poole took time from their busy careers as newspaper publishers, book printers, and electro-type foundry operators in the Mechanic Falls section of Poland to assess the changes that had taken place throughout the land since the Civil War. They observed that "old customs, habits, and ways of working, thinking, and speaking" had given way to new ones. The "progress of civilization" had transformed "gloomy forests" into "beautiful villages and populous cities." Moreover, it had annihilated distance through the introduction of steam power and the magnetic telegraph. The spinning wheel, fulling and carding mill, traveling tailor, and itinerant shoemaker had passed permanently into the annals of history. "Articles once wrought by hand, hammer, and hard and tiresome physical exertion," the brothers noted, were "now turned out by machinery in a far more workmanlike manner, and at far cheaper rates." Rather than lamenting these changes, the Pooles celebrated the benefits brought about by "the inevitable law of progress." Progress had exposed people to new "commodities, manners and modes of thought," ending the isolation of small towns like Poland. Furthermore, "the tide

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Native Born</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lewiston</td>
<td>14,445</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>9,316</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>10,875</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>39,710</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>10,435</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>65,843,302</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>10,460,085</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more on the ethnic heritage of Lewiston, Maine, see: Historic Lewiston: Franco-American Origins ([Lewiston, ME]: Lewiston Historical Commission, 1974).
of progress" sweeping along Poland's "progressive" sons and daughters had led to the creation of the town's "greatest industry" and "gigantic institution," the Poland Spring resort.

The primary sources for this study are the Hill-Top introduced in 1894 and promotional literature dating from 1876 onward. Although they provide the most readily accessible and voluminous insight into Poland Spring, they are undeniably Ricker-influenced and rose-tinted windows on the past. Even many of the contemporary newspaper articles were often little more than repackaged versions of the resort's catalogs. The personal papers of the Ricker family are surprisingly plentiful, the observations of patrons disappointingly sparse, and insights of employees virtually nonexistent. A smattering of correspondence, diary entries, newspaper accounts, and one extensive county court transcript help filter out some of the promotional hype and fill in some of the social reality of the situation on the hilltop. The study analyzes, in addition to literary evidence, other cultural artifacts such as architecture, celebrations, souvenirs, meals, fashions, dances, games, paintings, photographs, sporting events, and land-

"Poole and Poole, History of Poland, 7, 34-5, 85, 94-7.

The effects of modernization on "island communities" such as Poland are assessed in the classic study of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era by Robert Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967).
scapes. In general, however, the nature of the available sources tends to exaggerate the vividness of the contrasts far beyond reality. Nevertheless, the lofty cultural ideals the proprietors and patrons strove for is as much a part of the story of Poland Spring as the underlying social reality.\textsuperscript{25}

The dissertation is divided into three parts, which examine, in order, the actors, architecture, and landscapes behind, respectively, the human, built, and natural environments at Poland Spring. Chapter one introduces the Ricker family and follows the fortunes of its country inn amidst the economic transformations of first, the Maine frontier during the late eighteenth century and then, the countryside during the mid nineteenth century. The second chapter examines the social composition and group dynamics of the resort’s clientele, shining the spotlight most intently on the premium placed upon exclusivity.

The opening chapter of part two is set at the 1794 Mansion House, home to the Ricker family and site of the Ricker Inn. The chapter demonstrates how the homestead served as a symbol of the colonial revival, linking the proprietors to a noble past. At the same time, promotional literature

\textsuperscript{25}Clifford Geertz, \textit{The Interpretation of Cultures} (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5-10.

The work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz has influenced my approach to the nonliterary texts. The multilayered ethnographic approach to historical inquiry, or "thick description," advocated by Geertz seeks to understand the past by interpreting the meanings bound up in "webs of significance."
also emphasized the latest technological improvements featured in the hostelry. Chapter four takes readers through the 1876 Poland Spring House and analyzes the building as a monument to both nostalgic conceptions of domesticity and nobility, and contemporary views of status, leisure, and consumption.

Part three begins with a visit to the 1860 Spring House for an exploration of the geological, aboriginal, colonial, and industrial landscapes associated with the source of the site’s reputation. Chapter five analyzes the antimodern and modern legends and symbols used to promote Poland Spring Water. It also examines the relationship between the water’s popularity and the Gilded-Age obsession with purity. Chapter six considers the pastoral image, worshipped by supporters of the country life movement and symbolized by the 1898 Cow Barn, that promoters of the resort projected upon the consolidating, increasingly commercial, agricultural landscape. The seventh chapter looks at the effect of the back-to-nature movement on the landscape, particularly at efforts by the Rickers to control nature through projects such as the construction of a greenhouse in 1896. Chapter eight surveys the recreational landscape, best represented at the resort by the golf course laid out in 1896, as evidence of the strenuous life movement and the leisure revolution that took place during the late nineteenth century.

The study concludes by reviewing the Maine State Building, a structure the Rickers had moved to Poland Spring
from Chicago at the conclusion of the World Columbian Exposition in 1894. Home to a museum, library, newspaper, and art gallery, the building reflected the influence of the city beautiful movement. This cast off from the White City also symbolized the penetration of the modern urban values that transformed a country farm into "a city of vivid contrasts" during the Gilded Age.
PART I

ACTORS: THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
CHAPTER I

THE PROPRIETORS

"Jabes Ricker, God says 'you must give the Shakers your farm,'" commanded Father John Barnes, leader of the Alfred Shaker community, in 1793. "Well, if God says so, it must be so. But you shall pay me for it," replied Ricker. Affirming the prevailing late-nineteenth-century view that progress was providential, a Shaker Sister recorded this bit of oral history a century after its utterance. As a consequence of the exchange between the two parties, a farm family prepared to move deeper into the hinterlands of the District of Maine and began a long quest to make a hilltop in the town of Poland pay off. Driven first by a sense of family obligation and propelled later by the allure of material wealth, the Rickers set about transforming their piece of the eastern frontier into a secure home, valuable legacy, and inviting attraction.¹


The question of when the notion of making the land pay originated has spawned much historiographical debate. It is a central issue for many studies of colonial New England communities. The literature on the subject is too voluminous to cite for the purposes of this study, but for a detailed case in support of the early origins of entrepreneurial, liberal capitalism, see: John Frederick Martin, Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
In the years following the American Revolution, the Maine frontier was neither secure nor inviting. Instead, it was a region beset by economic uncertainty, social strife, political turmoil, and religious confusion. This made it fertile territory for converts to the many new doctrines of salvation preached by evangelists. Thus, when a Shaker missionary from Lebanon, New York, showed up in the vicinity of Poland in 1783, he attracted many interested listeners. The meetings so moved one of the local settlers, Eliphaz Ring, that he and his

family adopted the teachings of Ann Lee and covenanted their property atop Range Hill to the communal United Society of Believers on November 24, 1783. A decade later, Believers at the second Shaker enclave in Maine cast envious eyes upon the mill privilege owned by their Alfred neighbor, Jabez Ricker. After repeated attempts to convince him to join the group failed, the community tried a new tactic. The Shakers proposed an exchange of property, Jabez Ricker's farm in Alfred for the one formerly owned by Eliphaz Ring in Poland. The divine revelation of Father Barnes sealed the deal. As the recorder of this piece of Shaker oral history remarked with the benefit of hindsight over a century later, "little did [Jabez] think that his posterity would become what

3 Poland Mineral Spring Water: The Story of Its History and Its Marvellous Curative Properties (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1883), 5.

they are, the greatest Hotel Proprietors in the world, and leading men in the state and nation."

The Ricker Family

When Jabez Ricker, his wife Mary, three of their four sons, and their six daughters reached Range Hill, a small frame house far removed from the nearest road and neighbor awaited them. The isolation of the spot unsettled the homesick girls. According to family lore, they "sat in by the Old Chimney Fire-Place and, placing their buxom cheeks in the palms of their hands 'boo-hooed and bawled' . . . until darkness shut down and they went away to their first night's rest in the new home."

The next morning, or so the Rickers wanted people to believe, the family awoke to find two men at the door asking for breakfast. The hungry travelers, bound for Paris, Maine, had been turned away by the New Gloucester Shakers, whose village was located down the road from Range, soon-to-be known as Ricker Hill. Ill prepared to serve the strangers, the Rickers nevertheless invited in and fed the pair. This act of hospitality marked the genesis of the family's role as innkeepers on the hilltop. As Hiram Ricker related many years ago:


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later, "that is how my father [Jabez's son Wentworth] went to keeping public house. There was no other place for people to stop."5

Realizing the potential of the location as a resting place for farmers and stage passengers traveling between Portland and the western interior of Northern New England as far inland as Canada, the Rickers began building a new larger house and a stable a few weeks after their arrival. Putting "all their time and endeavor" into the project, they formed every one of the estimated twelve thousand clay mortar bricks used in the construction of the chimneys and forged every wrought iron nail. Completed in 1795, the eight-room, two-and-a-half-story, clapboarded structure, known first as the Wentworth Ricker Inn and later as the Mansion House, opened its doors to travelers two years later."6

Wentworth Ricker ran the inn with great energy, drive, and foresight. He saw to it that the county road was extended

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"Poland Spring Centennial, 22, 24.

Poland Spring Centennial attributes Hiram Ricker's statement to his "Reminiscences." While I have not located any document with this specific designation, I have found a forty-one-page, typed manuscript entitled "Poland Spring" at the Androscoggin Historical Society in Auburn, Maine (hereafter AHS). Self-described as a "historical sketch of the spring, and account of some of the notable cures," the work dates to about 1884 and records the reminiscences of Hiram Ricker.

"Poland Spring Centennial, 24-6; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6; "The Mansion House," Hill-Top, 6 September 1896, 2; Mansion House, South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, [1899], unpaginated.
through the family's property, thus ensuring a continuous source of passers-by who plied "the great thoroughfare" between Portland, Western Maine, Northern New Hampshire and Vermont, and Lower Quebec. Over the years, Wentworth improved the site in other ways as well. First came a woodshed and cider house behind the house. Then, using money earned as a teamster during the War of 1812, he built a barn in 1813. Finally, he added a second larger stable in 1825. All the while, Wentworth Ricker managed the facility as "a tavern of the good old-fashioned sort where landlord was host. Hospitality was met at the threshold; Comfort and Good Cheer awaited the guest within."

With his health failing, Wentworth Ricker turned management of the family homestead over to his eldest surviving son, Hiram, in 1834. Born in the house in 1809, Hiram had spent his youth helping his father operate the farm and inn. His business experience also included brief employment with a Boston clothier, John Frankson, for whom Hiram was working when called home to Poland Spring by his ill father. Wentworth Ricker died in 1837, bequeathing the family's 350-acre property to three of his four children, Mary, Hiram, and

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7 Ibid.; Poland Spring Centennial, 25-30; H[enry] A. and G[eorge] W. Poole, History of Poland: Embracing a Period of over a Century (Mechanic Falls, ME: Poole Brothers, 1890), 22.
Albert. Albert Ricker conveyed his portion of the estate to his siblings, effectively leaving Hiram in charge.®

By most accounts, Hiram's greatest strength was his personability. Described as "a good-natured, jovial man," Ricker was known as a "capital conversationalist" and "good story-teller." Although somewhat of a character, he was nevertheless a man of uprightness and honesty. These traits suited him well for his new career as an innkeeper.®

For the first decade under Hiram's stewardship, the Mansion House remained a busy place. An 1839 report in the Portland Transcript described "the Temperance house" as "a pleasant spot to stop and look abroad." Many years later, Freeland Marble recalled that the inn did "quite a bit of business" during the mid 1840s. Farmers continued to travel the county road, hauling livestock and crops to market in Portland. Others remembered the "long lines of teams" that passed through Poland "at all hours of the day." Many of the "rollicking, jolly fellows" who made the long journey stopped on the hilltop and stayed the night with the Rickers while on their way to and from the port city.10

®Poland Spring Centennial, 34; Deed, Book 6, 148-50, Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds, Auburn, ME, (hereafter ACRD).


10"Scenery in Maine," Portland Transcript, 5 October 1839; "Fought Way Across Plains," Hill-Top, 2 September 1922, 39; Poole and Poole, History of Poland, 22.
Not content merely to carry on the family business, the ambitious Hiram began to branch out into other endeavors in search of fortune during the post-Jacksonian rush toward liberal capitalism by the common man. For a time, Ricker traded sheep and wool. The reduction in tariff rates legislated by Congress in 1846 put an end to those ventures, however, as the value of wool plummeted from fifty to twenty cents per pound. In order to salvage his investment before the price collapsed any more, Ricker rushed his supply of wool into production. For six weeks, the Mayall mill in nearby Gray, Maine, operating at full capacity, wove over eight thousand yards of cloth.\footnote{Poland Spring Centennial, 34-5; L. C. Bateman, "Before Poland Became Famous," Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 1-5 February 1908, 8.}

Whenever the seeds of liberal capitalism were planted in America, they blossomed in abundance in the nineteenth century. The social and cultural constraints against individual acquisitiveness that had regulated local exchange largely withered away as the extension of communication and transportation gave rise to extralocal, profit-driven markets. Moreover, custom was replaced by law — specifically, a system of law that, according to James Willard Hurst, sought through various means to enlarge the freedom and release the energy of individual entrepreneurs. For Richard Hofstadter, the rise of liberal capitalism during the Age of Jackson represented the extension of core, albeit somewhat latent, American values of private property, economic individualism, competition, and equal opportunity to the hardworking, ambitious, enterprising "typical American" — a man like Hiram Ricker, for instance. See: James Willard Hurst, Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth-Century United States (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956); Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition: And the Men Who Made It (New York: Vintage Books, 1948), v-xi, 45-67.
The hardship wreaked by this financial reversal could hardly have come at a worse time, for Hiram Ricker now had a family to support. On May 28, 1846, he had married Janette Bolster in Thompsonville, Connecticut. It was the wisest partnership Hiram ever entered into. A native of Rumford, Maine, Janette came from one of the town's leading families. Her mother, the former Cynthia Wheeler, was described as "an exemplary woman, an excellent wife and mother, performing faithfully her duties to her family, to the Christian church, and to the community in which she lived." Her father, Alvan Bolster, achieved distinction in the areas of business, politics, and the military. By the time of his death in 1862, he had farmed and traded successfully for many years, served as a postmaster for over three decades and state legislator for several terms, risen to the rank of general in the local militia, and held the highest state office in the Sons of Temperance.12

Everyone seemed to admire Janette Wheeler Ricker. A souvenir booklet commemorating the family's centennial at Poland Spring remembered her as someone who "was very popular with guests of the Ricker inns, and idolized by her children."

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It also described Janette as "possessed of all those qualities which go to make the true woman." She was liberally educated, having studied at schools in Kent's Hill and Bethel, Maine. She was good with children, leading her to teach for a brief time. She was creative, prompting her to go off to Boston for art training. She also possessed "uncommon business as well as executive ability," "untiring perseverance," "great strength of character," and "a sunny and hospitable disposition." Assaying these virtues, one biographer went so far as to credit Janette Ricker with having "had a large share in developing the famous Poland Springs."13

The newlywed's first child, Edward Payson Ricker, was born at the Mansion House two days shy of the couple's first anniversary. Sometime between that event in 1847 and October of 1850, the family moved in with Janette's parents, undoubtedly for financial reasons. A local historian recorded that Hiram and Janette Ricker "remained in Rumford a short time after their marriage and were here with one child when the census of 1850 was taken." The birth of the couple's second child, Alvan Bolster Ricker, during the stay with the Bolsters apparently occurred after the visit by the census enumerator. The remaining four Ricker children, born between 1852 and

13 Poland Spring Centennial, 18; Bateman, "Before Poland Became Famous," Lewiston Journal. Illustrated Magazine Section, 1-5 February 1908, 8; Lapham, History of Rumford, 258.
1865, carried on the family tradition of coming into the world in the Mansion House.¹⁴

With one exception, each child would play a direct role in the operation of the family business in the years to come. Edward would succeed his father and oversee the development of the property into a world-renowned resort. Alvan would assume responsibility for the farm and culinary departments. Hiram would manage the spring water business. Sarah, the most retiring of the siblings, would concern herself with the welfare of the children on and surrounding the hilltop. Nettie would help edit the resort newspaper and supervise its art gallery. Only the oldest daughter, Cynthia, would leave Poland Spring. In 1873 she would marry Oliver Marsh and move to Springfield, Massachusetts.¹⁵

¹⁴Poland Spring Centennial, 19, 25–6; Lapham, History of Rumford, 258.

Poland Spring Centennial records Edward’s birthday as May 28th, which means that he would have been born a year to the day after his parents were married. The typed manuscript entry on the Ricker family prepared for the New England Historical Publishing Company in 1903 shows the 28th crossed out and replaced by the 26th of May. May 26th is also given as his birthday in: George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered: Recollections of Catharine Lewis Lennihan (Poland Spring, ME: Poland Spring Preservation Society, 1988), 55; and Percy Leroy Ricker and Elwin R. Holland, A Genealogy of the Ricker Family (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1996), 184.

¹⁵Ricker and Holland, Genealogy of the Ricker Family, 382; "A Useful Article," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 5; "The Cooking Utensil," Hill-Top, 25 August 1895, 6; Hill-Top, 8 September 1895, 7.

Cynthia did visit the resort. Following a successful stint at Jordan and Marsh’s department store in June of 1895,
The Revolution of 1849

As their father tried to provide for his growing family while recovering from the tariff policies enacted in far off Washington, DC, Hiram Ricker faced a second, more direct challenge to his livelihood closer to home. In February of 1845 the Maine State Legislature granted a charter to a group of Portland businessmen establishing the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad. With much fanfare and ceremony, officials broke ground on the project on July 4th. Soon thereafter, workmen began laying track along the route between Portland, Maine, and Montreal, Canada, that had brought prosperity to the Mansion House for over half a century. By 1849 rails at the Atlantic end of the line reached Poland, thirty miles to the northwest of Portland. Four years later, the Grand Trunk Railroad leased the newly completed, nearly three-hundred-mile rail link and commenced carrying passenger and freight traffic between the interior of Canada and the coast of Maine.16

If any community in nineteenth-century America demonstrated the economic impact of the railroad it was Poland, Maine. The Atlantic and St. Lawrence did not follow the example, she promoted her two newly patented cooking utensils at Poland Spring. Designed to improve drainage of fat, the fryers turned out less greasy doughnuts, fish balls, crullers, croquettes, and fritters. Cynthia demonstrated the equipment in the lobby of the Poland Spring House one Friday afternoon in mid August, selling several devices as a result. The Hill-Top gave a boost to her marketing efforts by carrying illustrated advertisements for the fryers throughout the season.

16 Poole and Poole, History of Poland, 7.
county road through the town. Instead the company swung its line several miles to the east, establishing depots at the Empire Road and Mechanic Falls. Situated along the Little Androscoggin River, the section of Poland known as Mechanic Falls possessed a vast supply of water power. The combination of the railroad and the river proved to be "a great stimulator of growth." 17

One of the "Men of Progress" responsible for the "continuous and rapid expansion of business interests" at Mechanic Falls was Adna C. Denison. He had made his money by opening stores during the 1840s in Western Maine and Northern New Hampshire communities served by the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad. In 1851 Denison and a partner purchased a parcel along the Little Androscoggin where they built their second paper mill. During the 1850s, the Eagle Mill produced about a ton of paper per day for book work, newspapers in Lewiston and Portland, and the Atlantic Monthly. On the strength of paper shipments, the Mechanic Falls depot would become for the Grand Trunk Railroad the largest revenue producer between Portland and Montreal. Paper mills, in turn, would transform Mechanic Falls into a thriving industrial village. 18

17 Ibid., 91; Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, Maine (Boston: W. A. Ferguson, 1891), 736. Mechanic Falls separated from Poland in 1892.


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The inroads of the railroad had tremendous consequences for the Rickers as well. Wagon traffic in the area now headed directly for the depot in Mechanic Falls, bypassing altogether Ricker Hill. Furthermore, those farmers in more interior regions of the north country served by the Grand Trunk no longer had to make trips to Portland. Finally, the advent of the railroad drastically curtailed stage travel, an important source of customers for the inn. In the days of travel by stage coach and horse back, establishments such as the Mansion House had provided convenient resting places for weary drivers, riders, and steeds. The iron horse, however, was untiring.

For the moment, the railroad had made the Mansion House obsolete as an inn. Looking back at this difficult period of transition a half century later, the Rickers recalled that "after the Grand Trunk Railway was built through the town in the early forties [the recollection was off by a few years], the hotel business largely dropped off, as travel by the country road greatly diminished, and the house was distant from the railroad." Guests became so few and far between that

England Magazine, 1897), 591-2; Merrill, History of Androscoggin County, 736, 738, 755; Poole and Poole, History of Poland, 91.

Hiram Ricker eventually decided to close up the building and move his family to Rumford.\(^{20}\)

In spite of his pressing financial woes, Hiram Ricker was more concerned with profiting from progress than with reminiscing about the past. Imbued with the entrepreneurial temper of the times, Ricker never lacked for schemes to make his fortune, no matter how desperate his straights. Many years after his death, he was characterized by one friend of the family as:

a dreamer and a visionary; a man of remarkable optimism; far-sighted; courageous; careless; a good buyer; a poor seller; always seeing bigger things than the profits at hand; always hanging on until the others sold out and left him to hold the bag -- empty as they are sure to be after the others had had their hands in and taken what they could grab.

Another account offered a similar assessment, observing succinctly that "Mr. Ricker was a man who could plan great schemes but was unfortunate in putting them into execution."\(^{21}\)

Having held on for too long in the woolen and innkeeping businesses, Ricker next turned his attention to the lumber trade in Rumford. From property near some of the most impressive falls along the entire course of the Androscoggin


\(^{21}\)Arthur G. Staples, The Inner Man ([Lewiston, ME]: Privately printed, 1923), 25; Bateman, "Before Poland Became Famous," Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 1-5 February 1908, 8.
River, he busied himself "landing in wood." The work did not earn him enough money, however, to support a family that had now grown to include a second son, Alvan. In an attempt "to hire A Little Mony [sic]" to tide him over until he could "get it [money] out of my wood," Hiram wrote to Dr. Augustus H. Burbank, the son of his sister, Sophronia. Ricker proposed a one-year loan, offering to give "a good Security" and handsome reward in return. Indicative perhaps of the wariness with which members of the extended family regarded his dealings, Hiram concluded his letter by instructing his nephew not to "say any thing to your Father About it."^22

While in Rumford, Ricker also oversaw the surveying, cutting, and hauling of timber from the woodlots of Portland businessman Francis O. J. Smith. Smith's interest in the hinterland lying between Portland and Rumford grew out of a loan he had made in 1849 to the financially strapped stockholders of the recently chartered Buckfield Branch Railroad. Two years later, Smith foreclosed on the mortgage and assumed full control of the struggling company. A grand plan for opening up the region began to unfold once Smith had maneuvered himself in charge. Undaunted by the unprofitability of the thirteen-mile branch connecting Mechanic Falls and Buckfield, he proposed adding twelve more miles of track, expand-

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^22Bateman, "Before Poland Became Famous," Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 1-5 February 1908, 8; Hiram Ricker, Correspondence, Portland, ME, to A. H. Burbank, 5 December 1850, Private Collection.
ing the railway to the town of Canton on the Androscoggin River. The final leg of the transportation network envisioned by Smith would consist of a steamship line that would ply the waters between Canton and Rumford. ²³

Optimistic that the transportation revolution, whose adverse economic impact he had already experienced firsthand, also presented ample opportunities for financial gain, Hiram Ricker prepared to invest his scarce funds in Smith's venture. In a letter written to Smith on August 18, 1852, Ricker apologized for not having given "any thing towards the Extension of the BB [Buckfield Branch] Railroad as yet." Ricker assured Smith that he would contribute the next time the two met, adding that "I will due [sic] what I can towards the Extension for it must go through."²⁴

Ricker also speculated in the second part of the transportation project, the Androscoggin Navigation Company. In 1853 the Maine State Legislature granted five men, including Ricker and his father-in-law, Alvan Bolster, but interestingly not Smith, the exclusive right to navigate steamboats between

²³Hiram Ricker, Correspondence, Portland, ME, to F. O. J. Smith, 16 January 1851, Francis O. J. Smith Collection, Collection 28, Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME, (hereafter MHS); Hiram Ricker, Correspondence, Portland, ME, to F. O. J. Smith, 16 September 1851, Francis O. J. Smith Collection, Collection 38, Box 16, File 1, MHS; Doug Hutchinson, The Rumford Falls and Rangeley Lakes Railroad (Dixfield, ME: Partridge Lane Publications, 1989), 9.

²⁴Hiram Ricker, Correspondence, Poland, ME, to F. O. J. Smith, 18 August 1852, Francis O. J. Smith Collection, Collection 38, Box 16, File 1, MHS.
Canton Point and Rumford Falls. The twenty-year charter included one major provision. The corporation had to have at least one thirty-ton steamboat in operation within two years or else risk revocation of its monopoly.\textsuperscript{25}

The partners wasted little time getting a boat on the river. Within a year, William Robinson of Buckfield completed the company's first vessel, the \textit{Surprise}. It proved to be aptly named. On its maiden voyage, the steamer succumbed to the hazards of the Androscoggin River, first running aground at Lunts Upper Island and then having its tiller and wheel smashed by the swift current at Moore's Rips. The captain returned the damaged sidewheeler to its docking area at Canton Point where it would remain. The accident forced the investors to abandon the enterprise. Once again, Hiram Ricker had met with failure.\textsuperscript{26}


There are several versions of the fate of the \textit{Surprise}, some slightly, some drastically different. The earliest, included in Hiram Ricker's obituary, reported that the craft was "wrecked in the rapids, hauled ashore and used to run a saw mill." Bateman claimed in 1908 that Francis O. J. Smith's decision to abandon the rail line between Buckfield and Canton...
Unfazed by the ordeal, Ricker started an axe factory in Rumford. Like all the previous ventures, it, too, was unsuccessful and short lived. In the process of losing the business, moreover, Ricker lost title to his land holdings in town. One chronicler labeled the demise of the factory "the crowning climax of Hiram Ricker's financial troubles."27

Meanwhile back at Poland Spring, Hiram Ricker was slowly losing control of the family homestead as well. In October of 1851, about the time he was felling the forests surrounding Rumford Falls, Hiram and his sister, Mary, mortgaged the farm to Solomon H. Chandler of New Gloucester for $2500. Five years later, following the failed investments in the railroad, steamboat, and axe factory, the threat of foreclosure loomed over the hilltop. The intercession of Eleazer Burbank, the brother-in-law Ricker had tried to conceal his loan request from back in 1850, postponed the day of reckoning by a few months. The end finally came in October. The foreclosure by Chandler culminated a decade of financial decline for Hiram

ended the ship's future, not the ill-fated trial run. Writing a few years later, two local historians stated that the boat rotted after its failed attempt to navigate past shoals in the Androscoggin River. In more recent times, Martin has maintained that a stalled engine imperiled the vessel on its maiden voyage. Hutchinson's discussion of the event left the boat overturned in the river and destroyed by the current. Interestingly, the most recent history of the Surprise by Norman A. Vashaw offers the most thorough account of the incident and the one that most nearly accords with the report in Ricker's obituary.

27 Bateman, "Before Poland Became Famous," Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 1-5 February 1908, 8.
Ricker and opened two decades of legal limbo for Jabez Ricker’s legacy.28

The Birth of a Resort

The very same industry that had caused the temporary shut down of the Mansion House also held the potential to resupply it with guests. An expanding network of rail service made scenic rural outposts such as the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the coast of Maine increasingly accessible. As a means of adding passenger traffic, railroads actively encouraged the development of the tourist industry by issuing guidebooks promoting the attractions of these regions. The impact was dramatic. In the White Mountains, the arrival of the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railroad in Gorham, New Hampshire, in 1851 brought an influx of visitors and spurred a corresponding hotel building boom financed by entrepreneurs like Portland-native Horace Fabyan.29

28 Deed, Book 233, 455, Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, Portland, ME; Deeds, Book 4, 61; Book 6, 148-50; Book 16, 69, ACRD.

In Maine the arrival of the railroads had a similar effect. Along the coast, more and more tourists conveyed into the state by the Portland, Saco and Portsmouth, and Boston and Maine Railroads frequented spots such as the Isles of Shoals, Old Orchard Beach, the islands of Casco Bay, Camden, Rockport, and Mount Desert Island during the 1850s. Inland, the solitude of pine groves and purity of spring water attracted visitors to sites like Empire Grove in Poland. Beginning in 1858, Methodists held annual summertime camp meetings there. Described as "among the finest and most convenient" grounds in New England, the Empire provided a place for the faithful to restore both body and soul.  

Perhaps inspired by the success of the Methodists in luring visitors to Empire Grove, Hiram Ricker came up with an idea to draw people back to Poland Spring. His youngest son vaguely recalled in 1894 that the family operated a dance  

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In 1890 the Adventists also opened a campground in Poland. The fifteen-acre "religious summer resort" featured a "lovely location," "waving groves," and "splendid scenery." Besides being "a decidedly beautiful place for worship," the well-shaded surroundings offered city dwellers refuge from "the hot weeks of our blazing summers." For more on the connection between camp meetings and the growth of tourism in New England, see: Ellen Weiss, City in the Woods: The Life and Design of an American Camp Meeting on Martha's Vineyard (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Brown, Inventing New England, 75-104.
pavilion in the oak grove atop the hill behind the Mansion House sometime during the mid to late 1850s. Ricker had recognized one need of the modern tourist — pleasurable recreational activities to fill up their growing leisure time. He was edging ever so close to the key to success in the tourist trade — promoting pleasure and health.31

A short distance to the north and slightly down the hill from the dance pavilion, water bubbled up from an underground spring. The Indians had known about the spot. Some of the early white settlers in the area had rediscovered it during a walk through thick woods in 1785. Almost a decade later, Wentworth Ricker had channeled the contents of the spring into a trough to water his cattle. The first member of the family to experience the healing powers of the spring water had been Hiram Ricker’s uncle, Joseph Ricker.32

In 1800 after unsuccessful treatments with blood blister and calomel, several eminent physicians had pronounced Joseph’s fever a hopeless case and left him to die. The lone "humane" doctor who remained had heeded the patient’s plaintive pleas for water and instructed an attendant to bring a jug from the spring. According to family tradition, Ricker had drunk the pure water, made a rapid recovery, and lived for

31 "Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 197, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME.

32 [Hiram Ricker], "Poland Spring," [1884], TMs, AHS, 1-2.
another fifty-two years. At the time, however, no one had attached special significance to the circumstances surrounding Joseph Ricker's "miraculous" return to good health."

The next cure credited in retrospect to the water was Wentworth Ricker's case of kidney stones. While helping hired men clear a field near the spring in 1827, Wentworth had sipped the water for refreshment. In time he had noticed that his pain subsided and then his ailment had vanished all together. Yet, Hiram recalled that his father "never knew what cured him."

Hiram Ricker claimed the title of discoverer of the "marvellous curative properties" for himself. In 1844 he had suffered an attack of dyspepsia so severe that "the most skillful and celebrated physicians" in Maine pronounced his case incurable. While haying with his hired men in July, Hiram had tried water from the spring without the usual added flavorings of molasses and ginger, when "much to his surprise and gratification, he was speedily cured." At first, Hiram had been unsure of what had brought about his recovery. He had guessed it had something to do with the water -- a hunch he had confirmed through subsequent investigation and experimentation. Although Hiram had encouraged "all his friends,

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33Poole and Poole, History of Poland, 33; Poland Mineral Spring Water, (1883), 9; Poland Spring Centennial, 38-9.

34Poland Mineral Spring Water, (1883), 8; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 2; Poland Spring Centennial, 36, 38.
who were similarly afflicted, to drink freely of it," his message had fallen upon deaf ears at the time.\textsuperscript{35}

A decade and a half later, Ricker decided to turn his hobby of talking up the benefits of the spring into a money-making enterprise. Now in the autumn of 1859, the water proved to be liquid treasure. His first sale netted fifteen cents for a three-gallon demijohn shipped to Portland. After thirteen years of one failed venture after another, Hiram Ricker, ever the dreamer and entrepreneur, had finally come up with an idea to make the family homestead pay. Moreover, the allure of the water brought the traveling public back to Ricker Hill. The resort era was born at Poland Spring.\textsuperscript{36}

The Mansion House reopened its doors to the public in 1860. By the following year, its guest rooms were filled to overflowing. In a letter to her brother Guss Bolster, Janette Ricker reported a constant crowd of visitors from mid June to mid September, followed by a steady trickle of three to four boarders throughout the remainder of the year. The inn attracted the likes of James Harper, owner of the New York City publishing firm by the same name. Joining Harper at Poland Spring during the summer of 1867 were the families of two professors and two lawyers. Recalling a quarter of a century later the appearance of the site in 1869, a writer remembered

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{35}Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 8; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 2-4; Poland Spring Centennial, 35-6.

\textsuperscript{36}Poland Spring Centennial, 39, 41.
\end{footnotesize}
a rough road leading up a steep hill, a spring overgrown with underbrush and "the 'Old Homestead' then, a big roomy country tavern, to which already some seekers for health were begin­ning to come."37

Despite the promising start, Hiram Ricker had "encum­bered" the family property with crushing debts. When he en­trusted the legacy to his eldest son in 1869, Edward received little more than "a vague title to an embarrassed farm," which he had to defend "against those who wanted to secure the prop­erty away from the family." Through the sale of cord wood in Lewiston, as well as with the hard work of his brothers, Alvan and Hiram, and the trust of a few friends, Edward managed not only to stave off foreclosure, but even to expand facili­ties.38

Ironically, the railroad that had once threatened the survival of the Mansion House was now saving it. Trains put Poland Spring within convenient reach of vacationers from throughout the Northeast and Midwest. For a connection, travelers arriving in Boston had only to board the "Lewiston" car of northbound Boston and Maine trains. In Portland the car transferred to a Grand Trunk train that continued on to

37"Hiram Ricker," National Cyclopaedia, 61; Janette Rick­er, Correspondence, Poland, ME, to Guss [Bolster], 11 May 1862, Private Collection; "The Old Homestead," Hill-Top, 14 July 1895, 2; "Poland Spring in the Past," Hill-Top, 15 July 1894, 2.


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Lewiston Junction, thirty miles to the northwest. In the early years of the resort, Hiram Ricker himself picked up passengers and brought them the final few miles to the hilltop in a tiny one-horse wagon that only had room for two other people.39

Over time, the Rickers increased the radius of their recruitment efforts. An 1883 catalog provided information on the best rail connections from New York and Philadelphia. In addition, it targeted guests of other hotels in the region, explaining how they could reach the resort from the White Mountains. By 1889 Poland Spring promotional literature included travel tips for points of origin as far south as Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, DC. Vacationers could board Pullman sleepers in either city in the afternoon, be in Boston the next morning, and arrive at Poland Spring by the end of the second day.40

Another entry in the transportation revolution — steamships — also made Poland Spring more accessible. As early as 1883, catalogs advised vacationers departing from New York Harbor that they could reach Boston aboard Long Island Sound steamers. At the completion of this leg of the journey, they could either catch trains to Maine or transfer to a

39Hill-Top, 2 July 1905, 8; Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, [1876]), 2.

40Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 73; Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1889), 75-6.
Boston and Portland steamer that left each day from India Wharf. Provided passengers made the proper train connections in Portland, they could be at Lewiston Junction by 9 AM the morning after leaving Boston Harbor. By 1891 travelers departing New York were able to bypass Boston all together. The Maine Steamship Line offered direct service between New York and Portland, with vessels leaving three times a week from Pier 38 on the East River.41

By the early 1890s, over three quarters of the resort’s guests came through Portland aboard trains of the Maine Central Railroad. Most of the rest came from the west via the Grand Trunk. Whichever line they traveled, they disembarked at Danville Junction, which had supplanted Lewiston Junction after 1886. Located five miles from Poland Spring, the depot marked the convergence of the Maine Central and the Grand Trunk before the former headed north into the heart of the state and the latter northwest toward Canada.42

By train, steamer, stage, carriage, horse, bike, and foot, over three thousand visitors flocked to the family homestead a century after the Rickers had arrived in Poland. With an average daily headcount of over two hundred guests, the

41 Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 73; Poland Spring Water: Nature’s Great Remedy and Its Marvelous Curative Properties (S. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1890), unpaginated; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, inside front cover; Poland Mineral Spring Water, (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1891), 76.

42"Hearing on Petition," 195.
resort had long since outgrown the confines of the Mansion House. So, too, had the Rickers and their patrons outgrown the way of life, nostalgically remembered as the "good old times," for which it stood.43

As the values of liberal capitalism and effects of modernization penetrated into the Maine countryside along the tracks of powerful railroads and the banks of mighty rivers during the nineteenth century, the outlook of the family's patriarchs changed perceptibly. Valuing economic security, Jabez and Wentworth Ricker had been content to pass the family homestead on to their heirs. Hiram Ricker was not. He was willing to risk the family legacy in pursuit of greater financial rewards. Consequently, the imperatives of the marketplace superseded the needs of the lineal family -- a family, ironically, that time and again had to intercede to bail the prodigal Hiram out from one investment gone bad after another. In the aftermath of the financial difficulties Hiram Ricker faced during the 1840s and 50s, the legacy he passed on to his own heirs in the years leading up to his death in 1893 was tenuous at best.

43"Bubbles," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 9.
CHAPTER II

THE PATRONS

The Rickers catered to the beneficiaries of liberal capitalism -- the families of businessmen, manufacturers, merchants, managers, and professionals. For this status-conscious group, the opportunity to vacation with like-minded and mannered members of the upper middle class was one of the most inviting attractions of Poland Spring. To ensure the social homogeneity expected by patrons, the proprietors tried to maintain a rigid exclusivity at the resort. Their efforts at shaping the human environment met with mixed results, for controlling the contemporary class, racial, and ethnic conflicts of American society was difficult, even at the summer city on the hilltop.¹

"The Representative People of Our Country"

Although no comprehensive profile exists, statistical, anecdotal, and circumstantial evidence suggest that the resort's clientele was predominantly urban in origin, upper middle class in status, and WASP in heritage. The statistical and anecdotal evidence comes largely from the Hill-Top, which through its "Arrivals" and "Tid-Bits" sections respectively provided weekly lists of guests and occasional details about individuals' backgrounds. The paper did not, however, conduct a census survey of incoming visitors. While it regularly recorded names, family ties, and hometowns, and randomly reported the occupational status of patrons, it never remarked about their ethnic heritage or racial background. Circumstantial evidence -- primarily the practice of religion and patterns of discrimination at the resort -- does offer some insight into these two social characteristics of those who vacationed at Poland Spring.2


Bulkley has conducted the most thorough, although still limited, analysis of the geographic and class backgrounds of resort tourists. Using a guest register for the seasons 1853-4 from the Tip Top House located on the summit of Mount Washington in the New Hampshire White Mountains, Bulkley

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The source of information for the list of arrivals was the guest registers. In addition to containing the most basic personal information on visitors, the documents supplied the all-important attendance figures by which the Rickers charted the popularity of the resort. In 1893, for instance, total attendance was 25,682, which actually represented between three and four thousand guests according to Edward Ricker. If his estimate was correct, then the average stay lasted for somewhere between six and eight days. The typical visit varied from the one day spent at Poland Spring by the loyal corp of local patrons drawn from the Lewiston-Auburn area to the entire summer spent by guests from more distant locales.³

From wherever they came, most people traveled as part of a group. A total of 1451 parties visited the resort in 1894. They ranged from lone individuals rendezvousing with guests who had already arrived to full families with servants in tow. uncovered trends consistent with the situation at Poland Spring four decades later. Based upon the high number of visitors who came from cities with populations of 100,000 or above (39 percent) and from the seven leading points of origin (45 percent), he concluded that "the White Mountain tourist was very much an urban product." In addition, Bulkley found that the hotel primarily served the upper class. Guests with elite occupations made up 53 percent of the clientele, lower white collar workers 13 percent, farmers 10 percent, laborers 20 percent, and miscellaneous workers 4 percent. These trends established at the outset of the tourist trade accelerated towards an even greater percentage of urban and elite guests over the remainder of the nineteenth century.

³"Bubbles," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 9; "Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 206, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME.
As the Hill-Top explained, the list of new arrivals usually omitted the names of small children, maids, valets, and coachmen. Assuming the 1894 registration figure correlated with the 1893 attendance statistics, the average party numbered between two and three people. A typical vacation pattern was for a wife and children to arrive at Poland Spring for an extended stay, to be joined later by a husband whose "extensive business interests" permitted him only a week or two away from work. The paper referred to the latter type of trips as "flying visits."

In 1894 guests hailed from twenty-seven states and three foreign countries. Over two-thirds of the arrivals came from three states -- one-third from Massachusetts, one-quarter from New York, and over one-tenth from Maine. Seven years later, the resort drew visitors from a wider area, thirty-five states and four foreign countries. Nearly the identical percentage still called the same three leading states home. Now, however, more local people frequented Poland Spring, as indicated by an almost doubling of the percentage of visitors from Maine.

In addition to its largely Northeastern cast, the clientele had predominantly urban origins. In 1894 well over a quarter of the visitors to the hilltop lived in cities with

"Poland Guests," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 10; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 2 September 1894, 9.

The Hill-Top listed 2435 arriving parties in 1901.
population in excess of one million. Over sixty percent lived in communities with 100,000 or more residents. The ten leading sources of guests were, with two exceptions, Portland, Maine, and Newton, Massachusetts, large cities, including Boston, New York, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia. In 1901 ten percent more vacationers came from cities of 500,000 or more, although ten percent less hailed from metropolitan areas of 100,000 and above. Residents of Boston, New York City, Brooklyn, and Philadelphia continued to be some of the most frequent customers. Visitors from Portland, Lewiston, and Auburn also made up a significant contingent (13.5 percent).

Poland Spring did not attract the families of the leading captains of industry in Gilded-Age America. The upper echelons of the leisure class vacationed instead at places such as Saratoga, New York, Newport, Rhode Island, or if they came to Maine, Bar Harbor. Poland Spring and most of the larger resorts in the White Mountains rated a notch below these first-class summer communities. Neither did Poland Spring host the era’s disaffected intellectuals, identified by T. J. Jackson Lears as antimodern modernists, nor its celebrated literati. The likes of J. P. Morgan, Henry Adams, or William Dean Howells would have been out of place on the hilltop. The family of Howells’s fictional character, Silas Lapham, would have fit right in, however. The resort was filled with many guests who shared his background: a childhood spent on a New England farm, followed by a move to the
city, business success, and the struggle to gain social acceptance among the genteel urban old guard as an adult.5

The Rickers actively solicited the families of men of progress such as Lapham. An 1877 water catalog referred to the spring's patrons as "persons in all conditions of life, of the highest respectability," namely clergymen, doctors, insurance executives, bankers, editors, lawyers, and merchants. Two decades later, the guest registers contained the names of families headed by men such as the Rev. T. A. Dwyer, a minister from Hyde Park, Massachusetts; Dr. George Trowbridge, a physician from New York City; James H. Lake, an agent with the Equitable Life Insurance Company in Boston; Byron P. Moulton, a former Vermont farmboy, like Silas Lapham, who had grown up to be a banker and businessman in Chicago and then retired to Philadelphia; Crosby S. Noyes, the editor of the Washington Evening Star; and Richard H. Stearns, "the great dry goods dealer of the Hub." Promotional guides for the resort characterized the patronage as "in the highest degree refined, aristocratic, and powerful," and "repre-


Morgan sometimes summered at Bar Harbor, Howells at Kittery, Maine, Lapham at Nantasket Beach in Massachusetts. Brown has chronicled Howells's long search for the ideal resort.
sentative of the culture and prosperity of our whole continent."

Guests had an equally lofty opinion of their social standing. Dwyer, for example, perceived the resort and its clientele in aristocratic, almost regal, terms. The clergyman anointed the Rickers descendants of an ancient line of noble Saxon knights. Moreover, he likened their main hotel to "a majestic palace . . . crowning one of the hills like the princely home of some great potentate." This was to be the summer haunt of the class of vacationers whom the minister immodestly referred to as "the representative people of our country." That was as it should be, Dwyer implied, for only "men of influence and high social standing," certainly not farmer lads, could comprehend and appreciate the pleasure-giving and health-restoring powers of the resort.7

Dwyer was just one of many clergymen counted among the resort's guests. The Rickers' policy of lowering room rates for ministers in exchange for their assistance leading worship bolstered their ranks. Each Sunday during the summer, the resort offered guests the choice of several religious services to attend. Reflecting the ethnic and class backgrounds of the

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"Wonderful Medicinal Virtues of the Poland Mineral Spring Water" (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, [1877]), 33; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 19 August 1894, 9; Announcement Twenty-Third Annual Summer Season Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1898), 1; Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1901), unpaginated.

"T. A. Dwyer, "Recollections of My First Visit to Poland Springs," Hill-Top, 30 August 1896, 4.
worshippers, Episcopal, Congregational, and Universalist clergymen most often led the sessions. The Rickers also made provisions for Catholics. Priests from St. Joseph’s Church in Lewiston came to the Poland Spring House before dawn on Sundays. After blessing the makeshift sanctuary in the Poland Spring House, Fathers John M. Harrington, Thomas F. Butler, or M. F. Drain celebrated morning mass with employees and any interested guests. Surveying the spiritual life at the resort, Jane Patterson, a frequent visitor to Poland Spring with her husband, the Rev. A. J. Patterson, observed that the "opportunity of religious worship" was "ample and varied to meet the needs of all."* 

Whether this ecumenical spirit extended to the followers of Judaism is unclear. The Rickers had no publicly stated policy prohibiting the admission of Jews, although discrimination could be practiced just as effectively covertly as overtly. Yet, the brothers certainly were not shy about making their distaste for other groups well known. It seems improbable the family barred Jews outright given some of the surnames listed among arrivals between 1894 and 1901: Adler, George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered: Recollections of Catharine Lewis Lennihan (Poland Spring, ME: Poland Spring Preservation Society, 1988), 43; "Sunday Services," Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 3; "Sunday Service," Hill-Top, 15 July 1900, 2; Jane Lippitt Patterson, The Romance of the New Bethesda (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1888), 284; Hill-Top, 30 August 1903, 15.

Jane and the Rev. A. J. Patterson of Roxbury, Massachusetts, first visited Poland Spring in 1873. For many years thereafter, the couple were regular patrons of the resort.
Baumgardner, Friedberger, Goldsmidt, Guggenheim, Gutmann, Kauffmann, Levy, Munchheimer, Naumberg, Nussbaum, Oppenheimer, Rosenbaum, Schwartz, Stein, Sternberg, Strauss, and Westheimer. In all likelihood, wealth opened the gates to the largely WASP bastion for genteel Jews.

"In her study of Maine's most fashionable resort area, Mount Desert Island, Judith S. Goldstein has stated that Jews "could not buy their way in." Yet, she went on to identify at least three exceptions: Joseph Pulitzer, Walter Damrosch, and Jacob Schiff. Wealth and, in the first two cases, Gentile wives opened the gates to the island for the families of these Jewish gentlemen. See: Judith S. Goldstein, Crossing Lines: Histories of Jews and Gentiles in Three Communities (New York, NY: William Morrow, 1992), 166-78.

To this day a pervasive oral history accuses the Rickers of having excluded Jews from the hilltop. Often cited as proof is the existence of the nearby Summit Spring Hotel. Mel Robbins, the current owner of the Poland Spring resort, has stated in print what almost every local who remembers the pre-World War II history of the town readily acknowledges in conversation — that Summit Spring was "the Jewish hotel." Robbins has gone so far as to claim that Laura Z. Hobson based her book Gentleman's Agreement on the discriminatory practices of Poland Spring.

Amos Knight began building his rival hotel and spring house on the site of the former Norton Q. Pope estate in 1900. After the expenditure of nearly $90,000, the 150-room White Oak Hill Spring Hotel opened for business in 1902. Two seasons later, Knight's chief creditor, Saco Savings Bank, foreclosed on the mortgage. By 1911 the bank itself was insolvent. To protect the asset, receivers entrusted management of the resort to A. C. Brooks, an experienced hotel man. In 1915 Nathan Baum of Philadelphia assumed control of the property from the receivers on behalf of the Summit Spring Hotel Company. During Baum's tenure Summit Spring gained the reputation of catering to a Jewish clientele.

Later generations of the Ricker family have steadfastly maintained that their relatives did not force Jews across town to the Summit Spring Hotel. Charles W. Ricker, a grandson of Hiram and Janette Ricker, recalled that Nathan Baum himself stayed at Poland Spring. Furthermore, he remembered that Baum kidded that "he only took a certain class of Jews at Summit Springs and sent the rest over to us." George Ricker and
Catherine Lennihan, great grandchildren of Hiram and Janette, have told me that Jewish guests were welcomed at Poland Spring. The strongest evidence supporting the Rickers' claims is a series of letters written by Simon Wolf to Janette Ricker in 1917. Wolf was an attorney, author, advisor to Presidents from Lincoln to Wilson, and vigorous advocate for the "civic and religious rights of his persecuted coreligionists, the Jews of eastern Europe." In a note dated August 13th, Wolf thanked Nettie Ricker for her "generous and liberal sentiments." He wrote: "To find in New England a woman all aglow for the history and people of the stock of Abraham and Moses is a revelation and gratification." Another letter written on September 18th and signed by Simon and Amy L. Wolf; Mr. and Mrs. M. I. Dryfoos; Belle K. Sondheim, who had been coming to the resort since at least 1901 and who added her name "with pleasure;" Ida R. Cullman; and Jacob Gimbel, the New York merchant, makes clear that Wolf was not the only Jewish patron at Poland Spring that summer.

I have heard all sorts of stories, ranging from the plausible to the fanciful, about the status of Jews at Poland Spring. The problem in assessing the accusations and denials is that the overabundant and undersubstantiated oral history has collapsed many decades of events into an ahistorical past. The decades make a decisive difference. My guess is that the presence of Jews was not much of an issue at Poland Spring during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, probably because their numbers were minuscule and therefore, tolerable. Simon Wolf's correspondence indicates that the presence of Jews at resorts was an issue by the opening decades of the twentieth century, but it also affirms that class was more important to the Rickers than ethnicity. Anecdotes about anti-Semitic signs warning away Jews and a Christian with a Germanic surname being told his honeymoon reservation had been lost suggest that the presence of Jews was a nonissue by the middle decades of this century, because they were strictly forbidden.

See: Mel Robbins, Poland Spring: An Informal History, 5th ed., ([Poland Spring, ME]: Privately printed, 1992), 17, 22, 24; Deeds, Book 178, 18-22; Book 186, 216-8, 221-2, 329-31, 394-5, 444-6, 511-3, 558-60, 576-8; Book 191, 6-8, 43-5, 94-7, 130-2, 161-4, 205-8, 222-5, 249-52; Book 205, 124-7; Book 260, 14-8, 55-8, Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds, Auburn, ME (hereafter ACRD); White Oak Hill Spring Hotel (Poland, ME: White Oak Hill Spring Hotel Company, [1902]), unpaginated; Summit Spring Hotel (Poland, ME: n. p., [1911]), unpaginated; Mary E. Bennett, ed., Poland: Past and Present, 1795-1970 ([Poland, ME]: Poland Anniversary Committee, 1970), 75-7; "Ricker Raps 'History' of Spa," Portland

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Nativist reaction against immigration generally and Jewish immigration from Central and Eastern Europe specifically made the last quarter of the nineteenth century a period of rising anti-Semitism in the United States. Resorts were one of many places where Jews found the gates slam shut. For some affluent, well-assimilated, German Jews this oftentimes brought an end to long-established relationships with hotels that formerly had welcomed them. A celebrated case exemplifying the shifting tide from toleration to discrimination was that of Joseph Seligman. Prior to 1877, he had vacationed at the fashionable resort town of Saratoga, New York, for many summers. When he arrived at the Grand Union Hotel in that year, however, the staff unceremoniously denied him admission. The hotel had recently come under new management and one of the changes Henry Hilton had instituted was the exclusion of Jews. Other resorts followed suit and in time, segregated clienteles became commonplace in the hotel trade.10

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The most notorious region of segregated resort accommodations was the Catskills, a function of the area's proximity to the large Jewish population of New York City. For accounts of the patterns of discrimination there, see: Alf Evers, The Catskills: From Wilderness to Woodstock (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 477-80, 516-9, 544-6, 689-703; Stefan Kanfer, A Summer World: The Attempt to Build a Jewish Eden in the Catskills, from the Days of the Ghetto to the Rise of the Borscht Belt (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1989).
In an 1887 article, Alice Hyneman Rhine addressed the rising anti-Jewish sentiment at summer resorts that the Hilton-Seligman incident had unleashed a decade earlier. She first recited the grounds for exclusion raised by hotel owners: Jews were becoming too numerous; they lacked social refinement; they did not spend enough money; they climbed the social ladder too ostentatiously; they were too cliquish; and they defiled the Sabbath. Rhine then attempted to defuse the anti-Semitism betrayed by the allegations. As she pointed out, much of the tension arose from underlying class and ethnic differences rather than strictly religious or theological disputes. To the extent religion was the issue, Rhine blamed Christian "ignorance," "contempt," and "inborn prejudice" for the social ostracism of Jews.\(^1\)

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**The Dickinsons: A Tale of Two Cities**

Representative of the class of people who vacationed at Poland Spring was the family of John T. Dickinson. Dickinson was Secretary of the World's Columbian Commission, the body that oversaw the celebration held in Chicago in 1893 to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the European discovery of the Americas. Through his professional duties, Dickinson knew about the merits of Poland Spring Water. It

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\(^1\)Alice Hyneman Rhine, "Race Prejudice at Summer Resorts," *Forum* 3 (July 1887): 523-31.
was Dickinson whom John Boyd Thacher, Chairman of the Committee on Awards, notified that the product "was the only spring water east of New York that received an award at the World's Columbian Exposition." In addition, Dickinson probably had occasion to visit the booth maintained by Hiram Ricker and Sons in the gallery of the Agricultural Building. Largely devoted to the promotion of the water, the display also featured inviting photographs of the Poland Spring House and the surrounding landscape. In the end, however, earnest praise by Dr. Z. T. Sowers, one of the leading physicians in the nation's capital, clinched Dickinson's decision to visit the resort during the summer of 1893. The site's healthful location, charming elevation, picturesque scenery, sumptuous accommodations, airy rooms, manifold attractions, and superior management so impressed Dickinson that he prepared to bring his family back to the hilltop again in 1894.12

On a sweltering Sunday afternoon in mid July, Dickinson, his wife, and his stepdaughter, Louise Mattocks, boarded a train in Chicago, Illinois, bound for Maine. The family was eager to leave the city, and not only because of the uncomfortably hot weather. The nation was still mired in an economic depression that had been brought on by the failure of

12"Bubbles," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 3; John Boyd Thacher, Correspondence, Washington, DC, to John T. Dickinson, 31 January 1894, Androscoggin Historical Society, Auburn, ME (hereafter AHS); Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 54; "Chicago and Poland," Hill-Top, 29 July 1894, 8.
several major railroads in early 1893. One of the places where the shockwaves of the collapse were being felt most violently was the Pullman Palace Car Company. There on the outskirts of Chicago, one of the "great movements of warlike strife," which the Hill-Top would allude to in 1895, was advancing, and with alarming consequences.\(^3\)

The hard times that had befallen the overexpanded railroad industry had caused George Pullman to cut the work force at his plant by half and reduce wages by twenty-five to forty percent. Angered that Pullman had not commensurately reduced rents levied on company housing and prices charged at company stores, workers had gone out on strike in early May of 1894. In late June, Eugene Debs, President of the American Railway Union, had called upon members not to handle Pullman cars in a show of sympathy for the strikers. United States Attorney General Richard Olney had responded by seeking a court injunction on the grounds that the job action interfered with interstate commerce and mail delivery. The injunction had been granted on July 2nd and the following day President Grover Cleveland had ordered federal troops to Chicago to enforce it. Over the course of the next two weeks, while the Dickinsons packed and made final preparations for their trip, rioting led to the deaths of two strikers and damage to three million dollars worth of property. The troops were withdrawn from Chicago on July 20th, just about the time the Dickinsons

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}; "Editorial," \textit{Hill-Top}, 14 July 1895, 4.\)
would have been settling in to their safe haven in Poland Spring. Little did the Dickinsons realize that the social order of their vacation paradise was also in need of defense that summer.14

Because of "all the striking effects" surrounding the Pullman dispute, the Dickinsons purposely avoided American railroads. Instead, they opted to take the Grand Trunk, a line that would keep them in Canada for much of the journey. Leaving Chicago at 3:00 PM on Sunday, the train chugged out of the city and was soon whirling through the farm country of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Once safely in Canada, the family took a quick side trip to explore the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River. Later on Monday, the Dickinsons made time to drive through Montreal and dine at the Windsor Hotel. That evening, they boarded the Grand Trunk's Portland Sleeper and departed the city at 8:40 PM. After a ten-hour ride, the Dickinsons arrived in Danville Junction. The last leg of their nearly forty-hour sojourn, "an exhilarating drive over the beautiful hills of Maine," delivered the family to the entrance of the Poland Spring House early Tuesday morning.15

During the seven weeks the Dickinsons vacationed at Poland Spring, they made quite an impression on fellow guests

15"Chicago and Poland," Hill-Top, 29 July 1894, 8.
and the editors of the *Hill-Top*. The newspaper singled out Mr. and Mrs. Dickinson as regular participants in the wide variety of recreational activities available at the resort. They played lawn tennis and croquet. They went down to Middle Range Pond to row, sail, and ride the steam launch. On the few days it rained, they bowled and played pool. Walks through "bewitching wooded paths" and on the boardwalks leading to the Mansion House down one side of the hilltop and the Spring House down the other provided the couple with additional opportunities for "healthful exercise."  

Mr. Dickinson drank in the combination of pleasure and health thirstily. Part resort, part sanitarium, Poland Spring was, in his opinion, "the happiest dual resort for the seeker after health and the seeker after pleasure that can possibly be found in the United States." Dickinson especially appreciated the healing powers of the water, crediting it with curing suffering humanity "of all the ills to which flesh is heir." Summing up his experiences, Dickinson commented that he had come; he had seen; and he had concurred that "Nature and the Ricker Brothers" had joined forces to make Poland Spring an ideal place for a summer outing.  

Mr. and Mrs. Dickinson did not involve themselves very much in the social life of the resort. Mrs. Dickinson did

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chaperone a hop at which her daughter took the lead in dancing the Virginia Reel. She also played cards on Friday evenings in the amusement room of the Poland Spring House. She was even fortunate enough to win a lady's work bag as second prize in a game of progressive euchre on August 3rd, the same day, coincidentally, that the Pullman strike ended. While the working class licked its wounds in Chicago, the leisure class preoccupied itself in Poland Spring.18

The social butterfly of the family was Louise Mattocks. This "most charming of Chicago's fairest daughters" spent much of her time with six young people: Misses Rita and Blanche Todd and Helen Stinson, plus Masters J. H. and A. A. Maginnis and Allen M. Rogers. During their brief time together, the "lucky seven" took drives to many of the attractions in the area, including Pope's Kennels on White Oak Hill, the Wilson House in Raymond, and the State Fair in Lewiston. On Monday July 30th, Louise invited several of her new acquaintances on a carriage ride to the "secluded hamlet" of New Gloucester. The group spent a "most enjoyable afternoon" blowing the coach horn, singing college songs, bellowing the Poland yell, and otherwise showing off for the natives.19


The exploits of Miss Mattocks and her friends made them centers of attention at Poland Spring. On the 8th of August, they had "a jolly party" aboard the steam launch Poland down at the Range Ponds. Several weeks later, the young people attended the Mother Goose costume party. Louise went as Jill. Her "most attentive" Jack was Allen Rogers. The impression "the beautiful young lady" made that night "well sustained her reputation as the prettiest woman in the house."\(^2\)

As the calendar turned to September and the first cool and bracing autumn days descended upon the hilltop, the family's time at Poland Spring wound down. During their stay at the resort, the Dickinsons had "won many friends." The Hill-Top was certain the family would be "much missed by a large circle of acquaintances." On September 6th, Secretary Dickinson, his charming wife, and pretty daughter boarded a stage, beginning the long trip back to Chicago.\(^2\)

On the "charming drive" to Danville Junction, the family would have looked out on a rainbow of color. During this season of the year, the White Mountains appeared to be as blue as the sky; the sun cast a "wonderful pale green light" through the brilliant foliage; the fields were "radiant with golden-rod, purple and white asters, [and] hedges of elderber-


\(^2\)"Bubbles," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 5.
ry"; and the trees were "festooned with swaying branches of the snowy clematis, in full bloom, with the graceful, silvery, green, curling plumes." Despite the natural beauties of Maine, the many friends they had made during their two visits, and all the social and recreational activities the resort offered, the Dickinsons never returned to Poland Spring.22

Perhaps the assaults against social exclusivity experienced at Poland Spring during the summer of 1894 had irreparably shattered the illusion of safe escape from the realities of the modern world for the Dickinsons. The list of incidents was disturbing. A group of "objectionable" men from Mechanic Falls had molested some guests one night. A white waitress had been caught walking in the woods with a black man. The Rickers had banished several members of the resort baseball team for rowdy behavior. These sporadic breaches of order paled, however, in comparison to the possibility that the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad might routinely transport "picnickers and excursionists" to Poland Spring.23

Guarded Gates

To the Rickers, the events of 1894 pointed to the need for guarded gates. They feared that if they did not control the make-up of the human environment, their resort would lose

22"Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 1-2.
23O'Keefe, Correspondence, 8 October 1895; "Hearing on Petition," 13, 222-3.
its exclusive clientele. Thus, the family erected barriers, both visible and invisible, to better shape the social landscape. Who the Rickers kept under close tabs or kept out completely reveals a great deal about who they let in.

The Rickers made no attempt to conceal the fact that they discriminated against many groups in order to maintain the prized exclusivity of the resort. Because of their proximity, local residents, with a few exceptions, headed the list of groups to be kept at a distance. While they were welcome to pass over the grounds, most knew better than to stop for a visit. Those who did not, such as a party from Casco, Maine, were halted at the guarded gates and told that excursionists were forbidden from the grounds. A local lawyer, Jesse M. Libby, was so sure "ordinary country people" knew their place that he offered to wager that fewer than a dozen residents of Poland had ever entered the Poland Spring House to eat a meal.²⁴

The keepers of the gates worried far more about ordinary people from the city than from the county. The Rickers feared that picnickers and excursionists, a euphemism for the heavily immigrant-stock, urban working class that populated mill towns such as Lewiston, would take advantage of the cheap fares offered by the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad to come to Poland Spring on day trips. Voicing the family's concern to a reporter for one of the Lewiston newspapers, Edward Ricker

claimed that the influx of "large excursion parties and curiosity seekers . . . would ruin the reputation of my house and drive away the clientage that we have worked so long to secure."  

A friend and neighbor of the Rickers, coffee merchant James S. Sanborn, concurred. Sanborn predicted that five and ten cent fares would attract a "certain grade of people." He did not mean to imply that this class of travelers lacked good character, only that they were not "people of wealth who spend their money." Sanborn based his opinion on reports of how floods of excursionists had transformed the character of Old Orchard Beach in Maine and Revere Beach and Nantasket in Massachusetts.  

The Rickers' aversion to excursionists extended to fraternal organizations. When representatives of the Odd Fellows asked if the group could visit Poland Spring in June or early July of 1894, Edward Ricker replied that he "didn't want them." Ricker eventually gave in, but only after getting members to agree to two stipulations. The party could not be any larger than 125 people, and as far as Ricker was concerned, the smaller the better, and the men had to bring their "ladies." On June 27th about fifty people affiliated with the

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Grand Knight Templers spent the day at the resort, apparently without incident.²⁷

While the Rickers openly banned excursionists from and only begrudgingly admitted Odd Fellows and other ordinary people to the resort, if they practiced other forms of discrimination, they did so discreetly. Class barriers, most notably in the form of the cost of admittance to the hilltop, were sufficient to screen out most undesirable elements. Thus, the Rickers did not bother to erect the formal racial barriers that were guarded so vigilantly elsewhere in Gilded-Age America. That did not mean everyone at Poland Spring was white. Native and African Americans were permitted beyond the gates of the resort, but only to fill specific and restricted roles.

Indians, the embodiment of the vivid contrast between antimodernity and modernity, were at the resort for show. Beginning in the late 1880s, the Rickers allowed Penobscots from Old Town, Maine, to pitch tents across the road from the spring. From the encampment, the Indians sold souvenirs to the guests. Drawn by the opportunity to make some money, so many Indians showed up that within a few years, they had "overrun" the place and become a "nuisance." At that point, Edward Ricker limited the encampment to only one family, refusing all other applications. Ricker explained that he

permitted the token appearance of the Indians because "they come there to sell their work and to a certain extent as long as they are quiet, they are an attraction." 28

The Hill-Top actively promoted the attraction, encouraging guests to "hie to the tent of Hiawatha." At the campsite, they could watch Newell Neptune make bows and arrows, talk with him about moose and caribou hunts "in the great wilderness," inhale the fragrance of sweet grass boxes, examine "the neat construction" of his handiwork, and most important of all, purchase "pretty things" as souvenirs. The final act distinguished "the descendants of that great race" from the disciples of the leisure class. The "noble red man and his squaw" essentially produced; the modern white man and his wife essentially consumed. The middle ground where they could "bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace" was the encampment turned bazaar. 29

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Newell Neptune was filling a well-established role. During the midst of a pilgrimage to most of the major resorts in the Northeast in 1886, Charles Dudley Warner noted that "the occupation of being a red man, a merchant of baskets and bead-work, is taken up by so many traders with a brogue and a twang at our watering-places that it is difficult for the traveller to keep alive any sentiment about this race."
Ultimately, the encounter between the two races served as "an object lesson in the possibilities of human progress and development." The "end of the nineteenth century red man" had shed the "yellow ochre, feathers and bear's teeth" worn by his "savage" progenitor. A conversation with Neptune revealed a "well spoken, courteous, polite, graceful, tall, manly, vigorous and interesting" — in short, "civilized" — person. Yet as a symbol of antimodernity, he could not be considered fully modern and therefore, he could not be allowed any further beyond the guarded gates than the grove surrounding the spring.30

Showmanship in the form of musical talent could also get minorities beyond the gates. During the 1890s, groups of African-American students from Atlanta University, Hampton Institute, and Tuskegee Institute regularly came to Poland Spring to entertain during their annual tours of New England summer resorts. On July 28, 1896, for instance, a quartette from Atlanta University sang "darkey melodies" to the accompa-

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Buying native crafts as souvenirs was a classic example of the conspicuously wasteful consumption that Thorstein Veblen attributed to the Gilded-Age leisure class. For T. J. Jackson Lears, Veblen's intellectual heir and latter-day successor as harsh critic of consumer culture, the shift in emphasis during the nineteenth century from producing goods to consuming them signified the transition to modernity.

30 "The Indians," Hill-Top, 21 July 1895, 5; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 16.
niment of the mandolin, guitar, and banjo. For their efforts, the students received a donation of $47.23.)*

Two weeks later, a similar group from Hampton Institute in Virginia entertained at Poland Spring. In addition to the musical program, several speakers from the school addressed the audience. Dr. Hollis Burke Frissell, principal of the institute, talked about the organization's work; J. S. Abbott, a graduate of the school, presented the black student perspective; an Indian by the name of Omahah told about the good work Hampton was doing for "his people"; and finally, Mr. Daggs spoke on other educational facilities in the South for blacks. At the conclusion of the evening, the patrons of the resort took up a collection that raised $54.53.)*

Booker T. Washington also traveled the New England summer resort circuit seeking support for education of Southern blacks. He justified the trips north on the grounds that they exposed his message to a new audience. During a swing through the White Mountains in the summer of 1889, for example, Washington had drawn crowds of between fifty and three hundred people every night. His program typically included a musical performance by a quartette of students and a lecture entitled "The Negro in America: His Conditions and Prospects" by himself. The receptivity of audiences to what Washington

*31Hill-Top, 2 August 1896, 4.

*32"Hampton Students," Hill-Top, 16 August 1896, 14.
referred to as his harangues on the "Southern Question" frankly surprised him.\textsuperscript{33}

Washington had high standards for Tuskegee's singers. In 1894 he took the school's music teacher, Robert H. Hamilton, to task for allowing the quality of singing to deteriorate. Criticism of the quartette that had filtered back to Tuskegee especially concerned Washington. In preparation for an impending trip to the North, he instructed Hamilton to add new songs to the quartette's repertoire and to train the singers in voice culture.\textsuperscript{34}

One of the major problems the musicians encountered was the expectations of Northern audiences. Washington wanted his students to act cultured and refined; many whites, however, expected black singers to shout and mourn, or to "play the Nigger." The dichotomy so troubled Isaac Fisher that while on tour in 1899, he wrote to Washington seeking advice. Fisher disdained the thought of aping the ignorant characteristics of Negro minstrels. Yet, he did not know how to deal with people who wanted the group to "play the ignorant Darkey." Washington apparently counseled Fisher to remain true to his principles, for a year later, the student wrote from the Fabyan House in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, complaining that the


\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 471-3.
quartette had received only $12, while a minstrel "acting the fool and servile Negro" had received $40.35

Washington made his first trip to Poland Spring in July of 1895. He was an immediate sensation. His eloquent pleas, convincing statements, and clever anecdotes in support of "the training of colored youths" caused his wealthy white listeners to dig deep into their wallets. During his stay, Washington raised over $250 for Tuskegee Institute. The appeal and success of his mission ensured return visits for many years to come. In 1897 students from the school joined Washington. The following year, Mrs. Washington, who spoke in behalf of Southern black women, accompanied her husband. By 1900 the Hill-Top described Washington as "one of the most famous of colored men of this or any age."36

Being a famous African American had also been Frederick Douglass's ticket to Poland Spring. He had visited the resort in the late 1870s, well before Washington and well before guests had decided whether even a great black man would be welcome on the hilltop. In a novel based on her experiences as a guest at Poland Spring over the course of many seasons, Jane Patterson related that a Southern woman felt the resort had "no right to entertain negroes without asking the guests


if it is agreeable." Much to the woman’s dismay, her husband spoke in favor of the famous abolitionist’s admittance:

that man is no ordinary bootblack. That is Fred Douglas [sic]. He is a great man, Frances. We don’t mind the color of great men.

Persuaded to address patrons despite his reluctance to antagonize Southerners "with all their prejudices," Douglass mesmerized an attentive, standing-room-only audience with his eloquent oratory. According to Patterson, the "profound impression" made by this defender of liberty caused many guests to regard him like a prophet of old. 37

In spite of the esteem felt for Douglass, Washington’s message of black self-improvement best salved the consciences of Poland Spring’s patrons. The Hill-Top praised an unnamed "very black man" in the South for preaching the doctrine of "work out your own problem" even more sternly than Washington did. Reminding his congregation that whites had contributed a great deal of money to educate freedmen, the speaker beseeched his audience to "get up and hustle for yourselves." He assured them that "there is room for you if you educate yourselves and don’t fuss about being black." The paper rejoiced that a black man spoke the "good, plain, hard facts," or more bluntly, that he dared "to lash the ‘nigger,’" for no white man could have done so "without creating a riot." Naively believing that no "line of human activity" was closed to hardworking, well-behaved blacks, the editors looked

37Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 96-104.
forward to the peaceful emergence of "the new negro" from an admittedly dark racial past.38

Another line of human activity open to African Americans at the resort was as workers. Patterson recalled that in 1881 "colored Dick" served as an elevator operator "with the courtesy of his race." A Poland Spring House breakfast menu from the same period featured an engraving of a black waiter on the cover, although it was probably a stock image. Besides the blacks employed by the Rickers, some guests brought their African-American domestic workers and carriage drivers on vacation.39

One of those workers disrupted the carefully guarded social harmony of the resort during the summer of 1895. The culprit was the same "colored man" who had committed taboo the previous season by going for a walk in the woods with a white table girl. This summer he had been spreading the rumor that one of the waitresses, Marie Saunders, "had the clap [and] that he could have had connection with her, if he so desired." To make matters worse, the man had "freely expressed" that he

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Interestingly, the editors were quick to disavow responsibility for use of the "N word." Besides setting it off in quotations, they added a parenthetical note stating that the black orator had peppered his talk with this slur instead of the appellations colored man or negro.

39Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 179; Menu, Poland Spring House, [c. 1882], Personal Collection.
owned a gun and would use it if any of the Rickers bothered him.  

Ironically, the unidentified man's greatest defiance of the social order came on August 28th, the date of the employees' masquerade. This annual event marked the one time during the season when the social hierarchy separating proprietors and patrons from employees was overturned and workers "owned the house." Thanks to the generosity and goodwill of the Rickers and the support of the guests' amusement committee, bell boys and housekeepers escaped their own cares and worries by pretending they were kings and queens for the evening. At nine o'clock, over eighty costumed masqueraders marched into the music room of the Poland Spring House to begin an evening of dancing and dining. Prizes were awarded to participants who came dressed as a snowflake, pine cone, the King of Hungary, an Indian, a washerwoman, and a member of Jacob Coxey's Army.4

While the employees of the resort prepared for the ball, the man and three or four of his companions were getting drunk in the stable. They became so noisy that Hiram W. Ricker eventually came to investigate, although he said nothing to them. Later during the midst of the party, the man made his way to the Poland Spring House, where he proceeded to smoke a

4°Daniel J. O'Keefe, Correspondence, South Poland, ME, 8 October 1895, AHS.

4°"The Masquerade," Hill-Top, 26 August 1894, 5; "The Employees' Ball," Hill-Top, 1 September 1895, 3.
cigar in the main dining room. When asked to leave, he at first refused and then "took his time about going out." His final act of defiance occurred during an encounter with a night watchman. The drunken troublemaker told the watchman he did not care what happened to him because he would be departing Poland Spring in the morning."

The incident affirmed both the perceived utility and actual futility of the guarded gates. The disorderly conduct of the black man was precisely the type of behavior the urban elite hoped to leave behind when they passed through the entrance to the resort. Yet, because of their attachment to the luxury and status of servants, many guests inadvertently introduced festering racial and class tensions to the social landscape of Poland Spring.

"The War of the Stages"

Maintaining the exclusivity of the resort meant not only controlling the human environment but also the means of transportation. When business rivals threatened to break the family's monopoly on stage and train service, and even lodging, in Poland Spring, the Rickers reacted with alarm. The eventful year of 1894, with its many forays against the invisible barriers restricting entry to the resort, culminated in a bitter feud and the construction of very visible gates and guard houses on Ricker Hill.

"O'Keefe, Correspondence, 8 October 1895.
The Rickers' main adversary was the upstart Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad. Established in 1890 out of the remains of several earlier attempts to connect Mechanic Falls and Rumford, including the short-lived Buckfield Branch Railroad that Hiram Ricker had once invested in, the rail line was one fiefdom in the multifaceted business empire presided over by Hugh J. Chisholm. A former newsboy on the Grand Trunk run between Toronto and Detroit, Chisholm had parlayed the job into a thriving publishing company based in Portland that specialized in the production of pictorial tourist guides. To ensure the supply of paper for his enterprises, this man of progress planned to transform the "forest-covered wilderness" surrounding Rumford, where Hiram Ricker had once lumbered, into an industrial city. The transformation entailed erection of a dam across the middle of the three falls that dropped the Androscoggin River 170 feet in less than a mile as it passed through the town, excavation of canals for water power, construction of three factories, and extension of the former Buckfield and Rumford Railroad to Rumford at its northern terminus and Auburn at its southern terminus. By the end of 1893, Chisholm's Rumford Falls Paper Company was producing over one hundred tons of paper per day. The railroad branch ensured it reached the Maine Central, a trunk line that could ship the paper to markets outside the state.

"Doug Hutchinson, The Rumford Falls and Rangeley Lakes Railroad (Dixfield, ME: Partridge Lane Publications, 1989), 8-13; Richard Herndon, comp., Men of Progress: Biographical
Initial plans called for the southern branch of the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad to follow a direct route from Mechanic Falls through Minot Corner and on to Auburn. While the survey was in progress, Chisholm and Edward Ricker met to discuss the possibility of bypassing Minot and instead swinging the line through Poland Spring. Ricker reportedly "entered heartily into the matter." In fact, according to George D. Bisbee, an official of the railroad, Ricker's support was decisive in convincing the directors to scrap the Minot route in favor of one that would run through Poland Spring.44

At first, Edward Ricker took an active interest in planning the branch. In September of 1892, he brought Bisbee to the top of the Poland Spring House's main tower and showed the head of the railroad's committee on location and land damage several possible places to pass through the town. Furthermore, Ricker used his influence to persuade local property owners to cooperate with the railroad. He also personally selected the location of the Poland Spring passenger station at Poland Plains. Ricker preferred this site because it commanded the best view of the resort.45


""Hearing on Petition," 73-4, 86.

Ibid., 73, 76-7, 89.
Ricker was not so interested, however, in entering into a freight contract with the railroad. Eager to secure an agreement to ship Poland Water, Bisbee offered Hiram Ricker and Sons the same rate the Grand Trunk Railroad charged at its Lewiston Junction station. Edward Ricker declined the offer, explaining that he did not make freight contracts with anyone. Independence gave the Rickers the flexibility to play competing railroads against one another and thus, to negotiate the lowest possible rate."

A more critical issue the two parties also could not agree on was where the line should connect with the Maine Central. Edward Ricker insisted that it be at Danville Junction. This "advertised center" was where ticketing arrangements between the Rickers and passenger agents for various railroads called for most guests of the resort to arrive. Consequently, this was where the Rickers had located their stage service. Another depot a few miles to the north would only confuse passengers and might take business away from the store and two stables the family owned in Danville Junction. The Rickers protested that they could not afford to lose any business since their stage line already operated at a "dead loss.""

The directors of the railroad preferred a connection at Hackett's Crossing because it was closer to the large Lewis-

"Ibid., 76-7, 91, 199-200, 213, 219.

"Ibid., 169-170.
ton-Auburn market. They rejected alternative routes to Danville proposed by Edward Ricker on the grounds that sharp grades would make construction too expensive. Although Ricker was clearly disappointed by the railroad's decision, he still supported the project, or so Bisbee believed. He was mistaken. Once it became clear in 1893 that track was not being laid to Danville, rumors began to circulate that the Rickers were contemplating building their own branch. Several attempts by Bisbee to discuss the matter with Edward Ricker were rebuffed with the response that he was away in New York.  

The Rickers were indeed planning to build their own rail line to Danville Junction. Once the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad made its connection with the Maine Central, the Rickers allied themselves with the rival Grand Trunk. On March 5, 1894, the Rickers filed articles of association with the State Board of Railroad Commissioners proposing to lay three and a half miles of track between their bottling plant and the Grand Trunk station at Lewiston Junction. Capitalized at $25,000, the Poland Spring Railroad was controlled by the three Ricker brothers who owned 243 of the 250 shares in the company. Their interest in the project cooled when they learned that state law would not permit them to run the branch as a private line. If the Rickers could not use the railroad

**Ibid.,** 77-9.
to control access to the resort, then it would be of little value to them." 

While this maneuvering was going on, the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad inaugurated its service over the eleven-and-one-half-mile branch connecting Mechanic Falls and Auburn on February 12th. Now instead of getting off at Danville Junction, Maine Central passengers could continue on a few miles to Hackett's Crossing, which the railroad had renamed Poland Spring Junction. From there a Portland and Rumford Falls train would take them to a station in Poland Spring. Guests of the resort could journey the final two miles by stage. To the directors of the railroad, the advantage of this new route was obvious. Reducing the length of the stage trip by one half to one third would reduce the amount of time the traveling public would have to spend in a hot and dusty coach. The Rickers, however, did not see the situation the same way.

With the summer tourist season only a few months away, Bisbee and fellow director Waldo Pettengill sent the Rickers a letter in mid March, explaining the preparations the company had made to receive passenger traffic. The railroad had negotiated ticketing arrangements with several carriers and had secured a contract with the American Express Company. The directors expected the Poland Spring station house to be ready

for business by June 1st. In the meantime, they wanted to
discuss once again the possibility of hauling freight for the
Rickers and asked for "hearty co-operation" in establishing
stage service to the resort.50

The presumptuous tone of the correspondence irked Edward
Ricker. The response he fired off a few days later registered
his irritation. He declined the offer to operate the rail-
road's stage line, explaining later that running a second line
would "double the expense and divide the business." Further-
more, Ricker informed the directors that he would deny the
company's carriages access to the family's private property.
He also warned that in all likelihood passengers who traveled
on the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad would be unable to
find accommodations at the resort. Finally, Ricker stated his
intention to place advertisements in papers warning people
away from the line, unless the company changed the name of
Poland Spring Junction.51

The letter caught officials of the railroad by surprise.
According to Bisbee, this was the first time Edward Ricker had
mentioned that he would deny passengers of the railroad access
to the resort. The threat was especially disconcerting
because the company had already begun to sell tickets for the
fast-approaching summer season. Confident that negotiation

50 "The Stage Line Controversy," Lewiston Daily Sun, 22
June 1894.

51 "Hearing on Petition," 210, 220.
could resolve the dispute, Bisbee visited Edward Ricker a few weeks after the exchange of letters. His peace mission was a failure. Ricker not only refused to budge from the positions he had already stated, he threw up another roadblock. Gates would limit access to the road leading to the resort. Subsequent appeals by Bisbee for cooperation, as well as further discussions with Hugh Chisholm, went nowhere.52

As far as the Rickers were concerned, the matter had moved beyond honest misunderstanding to deliberate attempts to undermine their business. The fact that the railroad had named two of its stations Poland Spring especially peeved the proprietors of the resort. Edward Ricker was certain it was part of a scheme to steal passengers away from his family's stage service. He was also concerned that the railroad intended to establish picnic grounds for day trippers on property it had acquired between Poland Spring Station and Lower Range Pond. In addition, three investors from Philadelphia, Henry K. Wampole, Albert J. Koch, and S. Ross Campbell, had recently invested $35,000 to transform the former Colomy farmstead across the county road from the Ricker's property into a rival resort. The plan called for the construction of a spring house, bottling plant, observatory, and hotel with a capacity of 75 to 125 occupants. The best way to get guests to the proposed Wampole Hotel would be to bring them by stage

52Ibid., 83-4, 219-20.
from Poland Spring Station over Ricker Hill, right past the Poland Spring and Mansion Houses. 53

At stake for the Rickers was a vital issue — the right to control access to their property. While the directors of the railroad argued that the road running through the Poland Spring resort was a public way, the Rickers countered it was their private property to do with as they saw fit. They worried that making it a public roadway would allow working-class excursionists to invade the grounds. More to the point, they feared that such a development would drive away the upper-class vacationers to whom the resort catered. Consequently, the Rickers dug in their heels and prepared for a fight. Maintaining the status quo and preserving social exclusivity was imperative, the family believed, to the welfare of the resort.

The Rickers responded to the competition by doing everything in their power to frustrate the railroad’s plans. As threatened, they placed advertisements stating that the Danville Junction stage was the only authorized means to reach the resort. Furthermore, they used their considerable influence to persuade — some said intimidate — agents of the Boston and Maine and other railroads to ticket passengers exclusively by way of Danville Junction. When the Portland

53Ibid., 16-7, 52, 59-61, 114, 224, 310; Deeds, Book 148, 416-8; Book 151, 171-2; Book 155, 198-200, 211-3, 267, 560, Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds, Auburn, ME (hereafter ACRD).
and Rumford Railroad tried to start its own stage line, the Rickers refused to allow the company to stable its horses at Poland Spring. After the directors made arrangements to board teams with Charles Nevens, the Rickers bought him out. The railroad eventually found a home for its horses at the Wampole estate. Finally, when a petition began to circulate asking the county commissioners to take the road over Ricker Hill by eminent domain, the Rickers responded by drawing up a counter-petition. Hiram W. Ricker himself canvassed for signatures at the town’s Fourth of July celebration.5 4

With the arrival of the season’s first vacationers in June, what a local paper described as "a very picturesque little war" heated up. The Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad went ahead with its plans to carry passengers from Poland Spring Junction to Poland Spring Station and then via stage to the Poland Spring resort. The Rickers responded with a declaration that the main road running through their property was a private way and with instructions on who was and who was not to be allowed passage. The gates would swing open with alacrity for "the elect" -- "for the son of rural Poland, for the prim folk from Shaker town, for the curious visitor from the city, for all the folks from the country

'round who come passengerless." For stages of the railroad, however, the watchword would be "go 'round."

A "titillating" air of expectation hovered over the hilltop on the first day of scheduled stage service. "A large and critical audience" gathered on the piazza of the Mansion House to watch the drama unfold. As the Tally-Ho coach left the Wampole stable, "intense interest" focused on driver Walter Goff and director George Bisbee. A few moments into the journey and a few rods past the Mansion House, the two men found the road blocked by a new fence and gate. Under the watchful eyes of Edward Ricker, his attorney William H. Newell, and a small party of spectators, Bisbee bounded down from the coach and approached the gate as if he intended to open it. Racing from his vantage point beneath an elm tree to the center of the road, Ricker barked out: "Don't open those gates, Mr. [Bisbee]." After a vain attempt to convince Ricker to let the coach pass, the railroad director "resigned himself to the inevitable." The retreat disappointed some of the onlookers, for crashing the gates "with whizzing lash and hoarse halloo," as one reporter observed, "would have made this story thrilling." Instead, the thrill seekers had to

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content themselves with "an absorbingly interesting topic of conversation." 56

For the remainder of the summer, the railroad’s stages could do nothing more than drop passengers off on the public highway that ran in front of the Mansion House. The Rickers did provide transportation from that point to the Poland Spring House. The controversy so infuriated some travelers, however, that they refused the ride up the hill and instead walked the final quarter of a mile lugging their own grip-sacks. As the directors of the railroad feared, the inconvenience did not appeal to the leisure class. As a result, business at Poland Spring Station was light. The Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad transported fewer than 190 guests to the resort during the contentious summer of 1894. 57

"Railroad v. Ricker"

The war of the stages entered a new phase six days after the Dickinson family departed the resort. On Wednesday September 12th, the Androscoggin County Commissioners traveled to Poland to hear testimony in support of a petition filed on behalf of Charles J. Cheney and forty-seven other people, as well as a counterpetition submitted by Hiram Ricker and Sons. At issue was whether the county should make the private road


57"Hearing on Petition," 62, 84-5, 263.
running through the Rickers' property a public highway. The burden of proof for the petitioners' counsel, Jesse M. Libby and George C. Wing, was to convince the three commissioners that access to the road was both a common convenience and public necessity. The Rickers cleverly planned to undermine arguments offered in support of the road's necessity by petitioning to have a highway built to the north of their property.

The commissioners, petitioners, and attorneys began the day by touring the Poland Spring Station of the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad. They then traveled both the direct route from the station to the resort and the alternate route which the Rickers' blockade had forced the railroad's stages to take. After dining at the Poland Spring House, the parties inspected the spring and the roadway proposed in the Rickers' petition. Everyone eventually made their way to the Poland Town House where a large audience had assembled to observe the cause célèbre.**

Jesse Libby, representing both the original petitioners and the Henry K. Wampole Company, addressed the commissioners first. In his opening statement, the attorney outlined the major points of his case. First, thirty years of public use established the convenience and necessity of the road. Second, borrowing a legal argument used in enjoining the

sympathetic American Railway Union in the Pullman strike, he argued that the passage of mail over the route made it a public post road. Third, because the Rickers operated a public hostelry and not a private house, the road must be a public highway and not a private one. Fourth, the Rickers' promises of Poland Spring passenger and freight traffic as inducements to alter the course of the line constituted a binding commitment to the railroad. The Rickers' breach of "good faith," Libby contended, violated "the interests of right and justice."59

Anticipating the rebuttals of counsel for the Rickers, Libby assured the commissioners that there was no danger the railroad would bring excursionists and picnickers to Poland Spring. To point out the disingenuousness of this concern, he asked why the Rickers viewed the presence of a railroad station located two miles away with alarm, when they proposed to build one within a few thousand feet of the Poland Spring House. Libby also attempted to establish that in spite of recent claims by the proprietors, the Poland Spring House was a public, not a private hotel. As evidence, he cited the "great flaming advertisements" that had appeared in the New York Tribune, Boston Globe, and Lewiston Journal, as well as in promotional literature for the Maine Central Railroad. In Libby's opinion, all of these points led to the conclusion

that there was a "great crying public need, necessity, common convenience and everything else" for the road.  

The petitioners' main argument for changing the status of the road was that it had for all intents and purposes served as a public highway since at least 1876 when the Poland Spring House opened. Libby called eight witnesses who lived in the vicinity of Ricker Hill and who each testified that they regularly traveled the road. The fact that the Rickers permitted this, Libby asserted, demonstrated the necessity of the road. He also called upon these witnesses to verify that Edward Ricker had used his influence with local property owners to help the railroad acquire land.

In his opening statement, William Newell, one of the attorneys representing the Rickers, attacked the case Libby had built on several grounds. First, he charged that the real petitioners were "one class of people," the directors of the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad. Newell delighted in contrasting the original petition signed by 48 people with the widely supported remonstrances and counterpetitions signed by 337 residents of Poland, 150 businessmen in Lewiston and Auburn, and 500 guests of the resort. Second, he maintained that the petition was ultimately about competition, not public access to the road. Third, he rejected the contention that the Rickers operated a public hotel, noting that they did not

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60 Ibid., 13-5.
61 Ibid., 39-40, 127.
serve a "transient patronage." Fourth, he dismissed as "mere bosh" the accusation that the Rickers had misled the directors of the railroad. Finally and most importantly, Newell argued that infringement of the Rickers' right to control their property would impair the "quiet and seclusion" and "mar the beauty . . . and the exclusiveness" of the resort.62

Newell reiterated the control issue throughout his examination of witnesses. They readily agreed that changing the status of the road would lead to more excursionists and less exclusivity. The consequence, they unanimously testified, would be fewer guests at the Poland Spring House. H. L. Pratt, agent for the Bates Manufacturing Company in Lewiston, for instance, stated his belief that the proposed road would be "almost fatal to the business of the house." He predicted that the railroad would "bring promiscuous parties there interfering with the quiet and seclusion of the place and be obnoxious to the guests who go there for rest and quiet." Seth D. Wakefield, a resident of Lewiston and long-time visitor to Poland Spring, agreed that the road "would have the tendency of carrying excursion parties," which would "spoil the Poland Spring property."63

Newell's main witnesses were Hiram W. and Edward Ricker. His questioning of the two focused on their dealings with the railroad directors, the economic consequences of the road

62Ibid., 99-108.
63Ibid., 110, 113.
issue, and the need for the Rickers to control their property. On the first point, both brothers testified that Edward had made known to representatives of the railroad his insistence that the branch run to Danville Junction as a condition of his continued support. Hiram went on to state the family's position that the Danville connection had to be maintained "at all hazards." Edward concurred with this point. Furthermore, he explained that his initial involvement in the project, despite the lack of a firm commitment on the location of the southern terminus, was intended to demonstrate his friendliness toward the railroad, not to induce the directors to alter their plans for his benefit."

Newell also wanted the county commissioners to realize that their decision would affect the livelihoods of many local workers, not just the fortunes of the Rickers and the investors in the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad. At his attorney's request, Hiram W. Ricker had figured out the impact of the resort on the local economy. His calculations showed the company had spent $84,000 in the past year on labor, purchases from farmers, building supplies, and miscellaneous expenses. On top of this, the Rickers had spent another $31,000 on capital improvements. The implication was that the road controversy jeopardized future spending at these levels. Edward heartily agreed when Newell inquired whether changing

"Ibid., 169, 195, 202, 210, 218."
the status of the road would be a "detriment" to the business and the value of the property."  

Finally, Newell established through his questioning of the brothers that they needed to have complete control over their property. Both men insisted that any loss of control would interfere with their plans to develop the grounds. Moreover, Edward fretted that it would permit people to come and "do as they saw fit, and make it very unpleasant to guests." Well aware that confirmation of the Rickers' control over the road might alarm townspeople who had used it for years, Hiram offered assurances that the family did not "have any objection to any person in Poland going through there privately."  

Edward Ricker valued control so highly because it was the means by which the family maintained the all-important exclusiveness of Poland Spring. He claimed that ninety-nine percent of resorts in the United States failed when they lacked the element of exclusivity. Ricker cited the Profile House in Franconia, New Hampshire, and the Old Orchard House in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, as examples of hotels that had lost business once railroads made them too accessible. Proud of the patronage his family had "catered and studied to get," he testified that the resort "is known today as having the finest class of trade that there is in any resort in this

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"Ibid., 170-2, 205.
"Ibid., 180, 205.
country or Europe." Ricker did not want to see his carefully cultivated clientele driven away by the introduction of what Newell referred to as a promiscuous "transient trade." 6 7

Because of the Rickers' influence in Poland, the town could not remain neutral in the dispute. The family had pressed the issue by pushing for a special town meeting to enlist aid in defending its property "from the encroachments of objectionable excursion parties." Convened on August 16th, the session drew almost two-thirds of the eligible voters. By a nearly unanimous margin, they instructed the selectmen "to use all fair and honorable means to defeat the petition" backed by the railroad. The show of support affirmed for the Hill-Top the "esteem in which the Messrs. Ricker are held by their townsmen." 6 8

Representing the Town of Poland at the hearing, John A. Morrill dutifully carried out the instructions. For Morrill, the issue before the county commissioners boiled down to a choice between benefitting private interest or public good. He placed the burden of proof on the proponents of a public taking of private property through the "strong arm of the law" -- a condition the petitioners had utterly failed to meet in his judgment. Morrill maintained that witnesses for the petitioners had presented no convincing testimony demonstrat-

67Ibid., 211-2.

68Ibid., 190-1, 351; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 19 August 1894, 4.

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ing either the convenience or necessity -- the standards required by law -- of making the road a public way."

In his closing statement for the remonstrants, Albert R. Savage, the other attorney representing Hiram Ricker and Sons, extended Morrill's argument. Agreeing that the road had nothing to do with common convenience or public interest, Savage countered that it had everything to do with competition between two rival businesses. He dismissed the railroad-backed petition as an attempt "to invoke the strong arm of the state . . . to gratify the business interests . . . of a single corporation." Defending the interests of his own clients, Savage cautioned:

To open a public highway through the [resort] will deprive its proprietors of the control, management and protection of their property from the introduction of objectionable people and excursionists who would thus mar the quiet and beauty of its surroundings, and thereby deprive them of one of their greatest charms and chief attractions.

Nothing less than confirmation that the Rickers had the right of absolute control over their private property would satisfy Savage."

The attorney did not rest his case with an appeal to one of the core values of liberalism. He went on to equate the private interests of the Rickers with the public interests of the town, county, and even state. By building and maintaining the road in question, the Rickers had saved the town and


Ibid., 286, 293, 305, 307.
county money. By spending nearly $85,000 each year to operate
the resort, they provided the area with a "source of great
prosperity." By promoting the Poland Spring House and Poland
Water, they carried the reputation of the town and county into
the world. Moreover, by contributing to the summer tourist
trade, they added to the state's chief source of income.
Citing the harm increased public access had done to hotels in
Old Orchard Beach and Bar Harbor, Maine, in recent years,
Savage warned that opening a public way through the Poland
Spring resort might kill the goose that had been laying the
golden egg. 71

George C. Wing, attorney for the Portland and Rumford
Falls Railroad, rebutted the defense of private property
rights with a high-minded oration on Americanism. Wing's
America was a place where roads were built to satisfy the
public's curiosity; where a poor man had the right at least to
look at the Poland Spring House, even if he could not afford
to stay there; and where any barefoot boy could grow up to be
a bigger man than "Ed" Ricker. Most of all, his America was
a place where the "ground tier of sentiment" held that it was
"the common people who must be served." Wing declared that no
individual had the right either to obstruct "public conven-
nience and necessity" or impede "the march of progress." 72


72 Ibid., 323.
Wing went on to attack the vaunted exclusivity of the Poland Spring resort as a "sham." After all, he noted, the Rickers allowed Indians and rowdy, brawling Irish ballplayers on the grounds. Furthermore, they proposed to build a rail line that would come much closer to the Poland Spring House than the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad did. Observing that water and oil cannot mix, Wing dismissed as idle talk suggestions that opening the road to the public would bring excursionists to the resort.\textsuperscript{73}

In his closing remarks, Jesse Libby pursued his colleague's assault on the "false issue" of excursionists. He, too, used the water and oil metaphor to describe the stratified social structure that made the association of country people and resort visitors "one of those social matters impossible in the nature of things." Besides, financial circumstances and judicial protection would safeguard the Rickers, Libby contended, "more effectually than the angel with the flaming sword protected the Garden of Eden in the beginning of our race."\textsuperscript{74}

Libby also followed the lead of his co-counsel by employing the rhetoric of Americanism to chastise the Rickers. He complained that control of the public interest by one man was "contrary to the spirit of American institutions." Appealing to the "public conscience," Libby likewise referred

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., 328-30.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., 333-4.
to the policy of denying access to only one group as "an anomaly in American institutions." He compared the sorting that went on when travelers reached Ricker Hill to the division of the public into sheep and goats and questioned whether such a policy was in keeping with "the spirit of Americanism." Libby even went so far as to equate the Rickers' obsession with controlling the movement of their guests with slavery, reminding the commissioners that "since the emancipation [sic] proclamation there has been no such property rights in persons." 7

Responding to criticism that the petitioners were seeking public favor for a private interest, Libby argued that promoting economic development was good public policy. He had in mind the plan of the Wampole Company to develop the Colomy farm into a spring water business and hotel. Libby claimed the property possessed an outlook "just as good" and water "just as pure" as Poland Spring. Access to the road, he promised, would bring the town more investment in the Wampole estate and thus, more taxable real estate. 76

Libby concluded his remarks by making Edward Ricker the issue. He advised the people of Poland not to confuse a right with the "sufferance" of an individual. If they did, he warned, "the very next man who crosses the whim of any proprietor of this estate is liable to be shut out." Libby

75 Ibid., 336, 344, 350, 352.
76 Ibid., 345, 349.
submitted to the county commissioners that the public’s right of passage could only be guaranteed by finding that the road met the test of common convenience and necessity and then ruling it a public way."

After four days of hearings and several more days of deliberation, the Androscoggin County Commissioners rendered their decision on Tuesday September 18th. As an editorial in the Hill-Top had predicted two days earlier, the commissioners rejected the petition, ruling that public convenience alone did not warrant changing the status of the road. Although this settled the issue from a legal standpoint, the directors of the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad and owners of Hiram Ricker and Sons continued to joust. Sixteen months later, the railroad was agitating to have the local mail route moved from New Gloucester Station to its own Poland Spring Station. An observer commented that the officers of the railroad had proposed the change "to work against the Rickers.""

As the on-going squabbles with the Portland and Rumford Railroad and other incidents during the summer of 1894 illustrated, the exclusivity of the Poland Spring guest register did not exempt the resort from class, racial, and ethnic

"Ibid., 351-3.

conflicts. Despite their attempts to maintain a strict social order, the Rickers could not always prevent a few excursionists from straying onto the grounds, or local tough guys from roughing up some guests, or unwelcome Odd Fellows from coming for a visit, or Irish baseball players from becoming too rowdy, or Indians from creating a nuisance, or a black man from disturbing the peace and causing trouble for two white waitresses, or Booker T. Washington from raising the "Southern Question." The same diversity that made exclusivity more desirable for some made it less obtainable for all. An alternative means of escape for those people distraught by the changing complexion of modern American society was to romanticize about a more culturally homogeneous past. If guarded gates could not restore a harmonious human environment, perhaps a colonial revival movement could.
PART II

ARCHITECTURE: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
CHAPTER III

THE MANSION HOUSE: "A NOBLE INHERITANCE"

At eight o'clock on Saturday morning July 14, 1860, a writer for the Lewiston Falls Journal and a companion embarked on a daylong journey that took them to Minot Corner, Hackett's Mill, Poland Corner, White Oak Hill, West Poland, Shaker Village, and Empire Station before winding up back in Lewiston in the early evening. One mile beyond the New Gloucester Shaker community and four miles short of the Grand Trunk Railroad depot, the travelers made one other stop -- at the farm of Hiram Ricker. In the account of the visit, the reporter hinted at the revolution in transportation -- the introduction of the railroad -- that had caused the farmstead to lose its "celebrity in one direction." The writer described the site as:

once a well known stopping-place in the palmy days of stages and teams and now vindicating its former greatness in the large house and still larger barns, speaking of the "good old times" when large crops were garnered in and the road was the scene of bustle and business.

The journalist summed up the situation by observing: "Alas! times have changed, and with them the centers of trade and travel."1

On another July day thirty-five years later, Joseph W. Symonds referred to the "splendid present" as he welcomed an audience gathered to commemorate the centennial of the Ricker family's arrival at Poland Spring. The former justice of the Maine Supreme Court contrasted the slow unfolding "of the best of New England character and life, during the earlier part of the century" with their sudden springing forth during the latter stage of the resort's history. Symonds portrayed the recent past as a "brilliant vista . . . now opening into scenes that seem almost of enchantment, where natural beauty and social elegance, each at its best, combine to interest and to charm." During the nearly four decades separating the reflections of the journalist and the judge, times had continued to change; new patterns of trade and travel had worked to the advantage of the Rickers; and the former celebrity of the family homestead had been restored. Ultimately, therefore, comparisons between the good old times and the splendid present pointed to progress, not declension.2

Despite the antimodernist tone of much of the nostalgia associated with the Poland Spring resort, its promoters primarily used the past for progressive purposes. They sought to advance modern civilization, not to encourage escape from it. In her study of the colonial revival, Karal Ann Marling has proposed that this approach to nostalgia was "part of the

great American push forward: an edenic past bolstered the drive toward a utopian future." To the Rickers, the past -- symbolized most effectively by the Mansion House -- was a legacy to pass on and foundation to build upon, not a refuge to retreat to and they made these points clear through their repeated reminders that preservation did not preclude modernization.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, comparing the past and present preoccupied many Americans swept up in what became known as the colonial revival. For the proud descendants of colonial ancestors, the past provided a source of identity; for preservers of traditional values and promoters of progress, it served as a standard of comparison; for nativists and antimodernists, it offered a place of escape. Broadly conceiving the era as the period between the first permanent English settlements in America and the rise of industrialization, colonial revivalists cherished the rustic simplicity, social hierarchy, and cultural homogeneity associated with the years prior to 1840. Anglo-Saxon pioneers, who planted civilization in the form of towns composed of homes, churches, schools, and even a few friendly hostel-


Offering an essentially progressive interpretation of the colonial revival, Marling has argued that antimodernism did not become the dominant theme of the movement until the 1920s.
ries, populated their imagined past. It was an age untainted by the perils plaguing modern society — political corruption, industrial depressions, labor strife, foreign immigration, and urban stress.  

Some historians trace the beginnings of the colonial revival to the sectional disunity of the mid nineteenth century. Others link it to the nostalgic mood permeating the country in the wake of the 1876 centennial celebration. Still others root it in the social and economic dislocations of the Gilded Age. Kenneth L. Ames has attributed the revival of interest in the colonial era to the conjunction of two sets of forces — persistent and historical. Persistent forces include the origin myths, golden age myths, and ancestor worship common to most cultures. Ames has maintained that this set of fundamental forces produced a nostalgia that essentially was celebratory in nature. During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the antimodernism spawned by the historical forces of urbanization and industrialization, coupled with the nativism triggered by immigration, gave to the colonial revival movement a more reactionary tone. Indeed during the 1890s, many colonial revivalists descended into the depths of defensive nostalgia in an effort to ward off the challenges to their status and authority coming from both the noveau riche and the immigrant masses.

The ability of the Rickers to make old times seem good played into this retrospective mood and partly accounted, in turn, for the improvement in the fortunes of the resort. Between 1860 and 1900, the family promoted its genealogy and heraldry, encouraged support for hereditary societies, participated in centennial celebrations of the town of Poland and of the Poland Spring resort, and transformed the Mansion House, the "large house" mentioned in the \textit{Lewiston Falls Journal} article, into a symbol of the colonial revival. In effect, the Rickers turned the family's past, a sometimes ignoble one at that, into a usable "noble inheritance" that reaffirmed their patrons' beliefs in the privileged status of colonial ancestry and the remarkable progress of western civilization.\footnote{"Sapientia Donum Dei"}

George W. Ricker of Boston produced one of the first records of the family's past in 1851. His genealogical research traced the ancestry back four generations, from Wentworth Ricker and his eight siblings to George and Maturin Ricker. The latter two brothers had emigrated from the Isle of Jersey to Dover, New Hampshire, in 1675. Not content to leave off in Jersey, the latter-day George Ricker speculated \footnote{\textit{Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir} (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 88.}

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on the family's European origins. First noting that Jersey was inhabited by people who preserved French "manners, customs, and language," although ruled by England, and then surmising that the family surname was a corruption of the French Richer, Ricker deduced that his ancestors had hailed from France.

George Ricker revealed the filiopietistic purpose of his genealogy when he claimed that "the New England progenitors of this family, if we may believe tradition, were large athletic men, endowed with great powers of physical endurance, which they had many opportunities of testing." The most important test came on October 7, 1675 when a party of Indians ambushed George and Maturin near Varney's Hill in the town of Somersworth, New Hampshire. Ricker's account maintained that the Indians killed Maturin and carried away the firearms and upper garments of both brothers.


The spelling of the younger Ricker brother's name in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register article is Meturin. For the sake of consistency, I have used the spelling used by every other source -- Maturin.

Ibid., 309.

In a footnote, the editor of the New England Historical and Genealogical Register suggested that Ricker based his account of the ambush on a misreading of A Narrative of the Indian Wars in New England by William Hubbard. Citing the journal of the Rev. John Pike, the Register contended that the attack actually occurred on June 4, 1706 and led to the deaths of both brothers.
The significance of this early genealogy lies in the emphases it placed on the European origins, colonial exploits, and great powers of the Ricker brothers. As early as 1851, George Ricker was already staking the family's claim to old-stock status. Furthermore, he was invoking the memory of past powerlessness to a generation increasingly confronting the kind of contemporary powerlessness Hiram Ricker experienced in so many ways during the 1840s and 50s. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century these themes would recur in accounts of the past. The only part of the genealogy future publicists would decide needed major modification was Ricker's contention that the origins of the family were in France.

Nearly two decades later, Samuel Ricker of Amelia, Ohio, wrote a letter on February 7, 1870 to Hiram Ricker congratulating his cousin on the new-found prosperity brought about by the discovery of the spring's healing powers. One of the topics Sam discussed in his correspondence was the history of the Ricker family. Scolding Hiram for overlooking a question raised in a previous letter, Sam asked once again for verification of their grandfather Jabez's land holdings in Dover, New Hampshire. He also inquired whether his cousin had ever heard a rumor "to the effect that there existed in Europe a large Ricker fortune," which suggests that the dream of striking it rich was pervasive among family members. Sam seemed anxious to receive this information, probably because he was about to set out on a journey that over the next
several months would take him from Ohio to Louisiana, Georgia, Washington, DC, and New England. He explained that the purpose of the swing through the Northeast would be "to perfect my 'Ricker History' and to put it in proper form for publication."

The history interested more than just family members. In 1877 Maine's preeminent and prolific genealogist, Dr. William B. Lapham, took up the story of the Rickers. Described as "an enthusiastic and diligent delver among the records of the past, always inclining toward those relating to ancient or noted families," Lapham explained the importance of genealogy to him and his contemporaries in the preface to one of his many town histories, The History of Norway, Maine. Writing in 1886, he observed that "sketches of the early settlers are of great interest to their descendants, and also of general interest." He deemed the consequent "popular demand" for genealogical records "a just and proper one." Lapham based this evaluation upon his belief that history was "made much more interesting and valuable, by accompanying sketches of those who accomplished it."

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8 Sam Ricker, Amelia, OH, Correspondence, to Hiram Ricker, South Poland, ME, February 1870, Androscoggin Historical Society, Auburn, ME (hereafter AHS).

Lapham began his genealogy of the Rickers by recounting the emigration of George and Maturin from England to Dover, New Hampshire, in 1670. Demonstrating the "painstaking, critical and conscientious" approach to history for which he was known, Lapham then set the record straight on the outcome of the brothers' encounter with a party of Indians in 1706, not 1675. Basing his version of the incident on the entry in a journal kept by the Rev. John Pike, Lapham reported that they "were slain by the Indians; George was killed while running up the lane near the garrison; Maturin was killed in his field, and his little son [Noah] carried away."10

Carrying on the lineage, Lapham cleared up confusion about the relationship between Maturin and Joseph Ricker raised by George Ricker's letter. Joseph was the son, not the

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According to the version of the incident handed down from Jabez Ricker to his grandson Hiram, Noah "was taken into Canada, where he was educated to the priesthood." The family history prepared for the New England Historical Publishing Company in 1903 added that Noah never returned to the American colonies.
brother, of Maturin. By including the text of Joseph’s will, the genealogy also supplied the answer to the question Samuel Ricker had so urgently posed to Hiram seven years earlier. Jabez Ricker had indeed owned land in Dover, a legacy of one hundred and seven acres inherited upon the death of his father. Following the family into the nineteenth century, Lapham reported that "Wentworth Ricker, son of Jabez, kept a public house on Ricker Hill in Poland, for many years, and his hostelrie was a popular stopping place for farmers going to Portland, before the days of railways." In addition, he paid tribute to Wentworth’s son, Hiram, who was now "the senior proprietor of the Mineral Springs and hotels at Poland."  

The interest in and value of family and local history awakened by Lapham was not lost upon the Rickers. Not coincidentally, the proprietors of the resort began tapping into an ever deepening reservoir of nostalgia for the early American past to boost sales of Poland Mineral Spring Water and promote the newly opened Poland Spring Hotel in the same year as the nation’s centennial. Frequent inquiries from people who "wanted to know how this Spring was discovered" had alerted the Rickers to the possibility that relating the

11"Ricker Family," Maine Genealogist and Biographer 3 (September 1877): 12, 16.
site's history would make drinking the water and visiting the resort more appealing.¹²

From cursory mention of significant dates in the 1876 catalogue for Poland Mineral Spring Water, publicists revised the historical content of the promotional literature into a more detailed narrative by the time the 1883 edition appeared. The new pamphlet traced the history of Ricker Hill all the way back to the arrival in 1779 of the first white settler in the area, John Wooster. Wooster and those who soon joined him were characterized as "worthy and sturdy New England yeoman [sic]."¹³

The 1883 Poland Mineral Spring Water catalogue went on to relate the history of the first Ricker settlers in the area through the history of the Mansion House. An illustration claiming to depict the site as it originally appeared showed a two-and-a-half-story, wooden building with an attached rear ell leading to a barn. Along a drive on the north side of the house stood two other farm buildings. Lest prospective patrons receive the mistaken impression the Rickers intended to put them up in the same rustic facility pictured in the catalogue, the text assured them that "the old house has been

¹²Nash, "William Berry Lapham," 341; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues of the Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1877), 2, 13.

¹³Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1883), 5.
remodelled and refitted with all the conveniences of a modern hotel.\textsuperscript{14}

In addition to the vivid contrasts of old and new, another advertised attraction of a stay at the Mansion House was the continuity of its ownership. The catalogue proudly pointed out that the inn had been "kept by the original proprietor until his death in 1837, then by his son Hiram Ricker until 1872, and since that time by the sons of the latter." To the promoters of the resort, this was "a remarkable instance, perhaps the only one in the State of Maine, of a public house, which has been maintained by the same family for fully three-quarters of a century."\textsuperscript{15}

In 1890 William H. H. Murray combined the fact that three generations of Rickers had operated Poland Spring with his understanding of heredity to promote the resort. Murray, a one-time minister who had since become a fervent promoter of tourism in the New York Adirondacks, instructed readers that heredity was "a biological force which transmits the characteristic qualities of ancestors to their descendants." He explained that it was "by the benign operation of this law of transmitted forces" that "the strong and vital" passed on to their children their physical appearance, mental and spiritual qualities, characteristic virtues, and distinguishing talents. In the case of the Rickers, he asserted, this theory meant

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Poland Mineral Spring Water} (1883), 6-7.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, 7.
that the "ancient family" had passed on "the gifts and knowledge of [the] hotel business." Murray concluded that "it is the 'hotel blood' in this Ricker family that enables them to manage their great Hotel as they do."16

Another promotional piece published by Hiram Ricker and Sons in 1890 railed against a perceived threat to the process of heredity -- "mongrelization." The anonymous author admired ancient civilizations because "in architecture, in art, in government, in social life, their development was from one germinal force and true to it." The writer longed for a time when "the word Thoroughbred, was once applied to humans as well as animals" and when "each blood was true to itself and was kept pure." This social critic deplored the "base admixtures" and "neutralizing currents" that modern people had "allowed to enter those old systems of racial development."

16W. H. H. Murray, "The Poland Spring Hotel," in Poland Spring (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons', 1890), 2-5.

All but the third of the four paragraphs Murray used to explain heredity appear verbatim in H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland: Embracing a Period of Over a Century (Mechanic Falls, ME: Poole Brothers, 1890), 36. The second and fourth paragraphs also appear in George H. Haynes, "Ricker Family and Poland Spring," Portland Genealogical Society, 21 October 1896, TMs, photocopy, 8-9, Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME. In addition, Haynes's address to the society was printed in the 11 December 1896 issue of the Camden Herald. The newspaper version contains one amusing misprint through which the "biological principle of transmitted forces and powers" became the "biographical principle." Interestingly, Murray's discussion of heredity does not appear in the 1893 edition of the Poland Spring pamphlet.
As a model of racial purity, the writer revered the "red race."17

Despite the positive portrayal of the ancient Indians, Native Americans held as ambiguous a place in the colonial revival as they did at the resort itself. While they were sometimes praised for having lived in harmony with Nature, they were also vilified for having murdered the likes of George and Maturin Ricker. Such was the case with a long feature article about Poland Spring that appeared in the August 6, 1892 issue of the Lewiston Saturday Journal. Entitled "Birth of an Ancient Inn," the introductory chapter began by once again resurrecting the story of George and Maturin Riccar.18

Not content with the matter-of-fact accounts of the brothers’ deaths reported by the editor of the New England Historical and Genealogical Register in 1851 and William


Similar themes and dates of publication suggest that Murray may have authored both "Poland Spring Hotel" and Poland Spring Water. A definite link to Murray both pieces share is the announcement for his book, Lake Champlain and its Shores, that appeared inside the front and back covers of each pamphlet.

18 Significantly, this account used the presumed Saxon form of the family surname. Most subsequent histories of the family adopted this convention. In 1913 the Rickers themselves reverted to the variant spelling when they named the third hotel built on their property the Riccar Inn. When Saxon heritage ceased to be fashionable during World War I, the Rickers anglicized the spelling of the hotel’s name.
Lapham in 1877, the journalist enlivened the romantic tale recorded by the Rev. John Pike in 1706 by highlighting the peril faced by the colonists and the treachery practiced by the Indians. In the retelling, Dover in 1706 was a "beleaguered" town at war with the native population. Standing just outside the stockades of their fortified blockhouses, the Ricker brothers "within five minutes of each other heard with death-struck ears the shots from Indian muskets that summoned them both to their last long home." The reporter also included the account of the incident Hiram Ricker had heard from his grandfather, Jabez. Hiram described the conflict as a massacre and the attack on the second brother as an ambush. Explaining to readers the significance of this 186-year-old colonial tale, the journalist made the "trite, but true" observation "that it is from sturdy stock alone, that sturdy sons and daughters are born."19

As evidence of the Rickers' sturdiness, the reporter supplied a list of their accomplishments: "founding homes, building towns, establishing families of worthy name from Maine to New Orleans, and last but not least upbuilding on a sunlit hill in the paradise of Maine, a summer home . . . known to all the world." The family's Saxon ancestry offered further evidence of its sturdiness. Downplaying the claim by "some genealogists" that the family was "a branch of the

French Ricards," the article maintained that "this fact is not so interesting as the well-attested location of the ancient feudal and knightly family of Rikers in Saxony in the 14th century." With possibly a stopover in Holland, the "unquestionably" Saxon family had by the seventeenth century, the journalist noted, "drifted thence across the face of Europe into France, and finally settled down in that 'blest isle of Jersey.'" The article went on to describe a vignette of the family's Saxon coat of arms and decipher its symbolism.\(^\text{20}\)

The writer most likely gleaned the information about the family heraldry from the research of M. F. Gaspar, the person responsible for selecting the coat of arms for the Rickers in 1892. Acknowledging the imprecision of genealogy due to the variety of spellings of surnames, the obliteration of identities, and the absence of data, Gaspar nevertheless sought to assure the family of the appropriateness of his selection. In a letter, he promised "if the birthplace of the first American ancestor is known, it will not be difficult to trace the family throughout Europe." Working from the knowledge that Maturin Ricker came from the Isle of Jersey, and noting the similarity of the Jersey Ricard arms and the Saxon Riker arms, Gaspar concluded:

I am confident that both are of the same family only that this [the Jersey] arms got a modification, as well as the name [Ricard] by the strong admixture of french [sic] for which the isle of Jersey is noted.

\(^{20}\text{Ibid.}\)
As an added touch, Gaspar appended to the Saxon coat of arms the motto found on its Jersey offspring, "Sapientia Donum Dei," which he translated as "Knowledge is the gift of God."  

Poland Spring Centennial

When the time came in 1895 to commemorate their century-long residence on the hilltop, the Rickers decided to publish a history of the family. Emblazoned in the lower right hand corner of the cream-colored cover of Poland Spring Centennial was the azure and argent Ricker coat of arms and the gold-lettered Latin motto M. F. Gaspar had chosen for the family three years earlier. Inside, the booklet was divided into eight sections that covered respectively the genealogy of the family, the history of the Mansion House, the careers of Wentworth and Hiram Ricker, the discovery and utility of the spring water, the establishment of the Poland Spring House, the main attractions of the resort, and life at Poland Spring. Using the historical information about the family that researchers and writers had uncovered since 1851, the guide wove the various strands together into one complete narrative.

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2M. F. Gasper, Correspondence, to Mr. [Frederick G.] Kal-khoff, [New York, NY], 18 May 1892, AHS; M. F. G[asper], "Riker or Ricker," AHS.
aimed at making Poland Spring a more inviting tourist destination.\footnote{Why the family celebrated the centennial in 1895 instead of 1894 is unclear. Perhaps the Rickers wanted the celebration of Poland Spring's centennial to coincide with the town of Poland's centennial, or perhaps the depression of 1893, which had delayed the opening of World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago by a year, forced the decision, or perhaps they were waiting for the reconstruction of the Maine State Building to be completed following its removal in 1894 from the Columbian Exposition fairgrounds.}

The subtitle of the booklet, \textit{A Souvenir}, suggests that the Rickers thought the history of the family and its homestead were a marketable commodity. The \textit{Hill-Top} promoted it as a work of "remarkable elegance, comprising 89 pages gotten

\begin{itemize}
\item The only sources cited in \textit{Poland Spring Centennial} are Hiram Ricker's "Reminiscences" and the writings of W. H. H. Murray. The heraldic information was almost certainly based upon the correspondence of M. F. Gaspar. It seems likely that much of the genealogical information came from the works of William Lapham, including his \textit{Records of Some of the Descendants of George and Maturin Ricker} and \textit{History of Rumford}. Another probable source of information was the article that appeared in the August 6, 1892 issue of the \textit{Lewiston Saturday Journal}, or whatever sources were used to write it. Many passages in the newspaper account are similar to ones in the guide. Likewise details contained in "Hearing on Petition" are similar to some of those found in \textit{Poland Spring Centennial}. Finally, much of the text about the mineral water -- the history of its discovery, analysis of its chemical composition, and testimonials about its efficacy -- was borrowed from earlier promotional catalogues.
\item One measure of the influence of \textit{Poland Spring Centennial} is the number of histories that have been based upon information contained in it. See Alvan B. Ricker, Bert M. Fernald and Hiram W. Ricker, \textit{Poland Centennial} (Poland, ME: Ricker, Fernald & Ricker, 1896), 21-4; Haynes, "Ricker Family and Poland Spring"; Mary E. Bennett, ed., \textit{Poland: Past and Present, 1795-1970} ([Poland, ME]: Poland Anniversary Committee, 1970). For an especially creative retelling of the Ricker family's history, see Mel Robbins, \textit{Poland Spring: An Informal History}, 5th ed. (Poland Spring, ME: Published by the author, 1992).
\end{itemize}
up in the most exquisite manner known to the printer's art." The illustrations, the paper proclaimed, comprised "a history of progress in themselves." In addition, the written record of the Rickers was "one to look back to and admire." The Hill-Top summed the publication up as the history of "energy and pluck, combined with the sweet and gentle influence of a noble New England woman," which had produced "a palace where but a short time ago was only a wilderness."23

Poland Spring Centennial opened with an illustrated tribute to the noble woman and her husband under the heading of "The Past." Neither the matriarch nor the patriarch of the family lived long enough to observe the centennial of the homestead. Janette Bolster Ricker died of heart disease on September 23, 1883 at the age of sixty-two years. As the souvenir booklet reported, although somewhat incorrectly, "Hiram died January 4, 1893, full of years, having attained the ripe age of eighty-four."24

The booklet was replete with themes and symbols of the colonial revival. After reviewing the spread of the feudal and knightly Ricker family from fourteenth-century Saxony through Europe and onto the Isle of Jersey, Poland Spring Centennial honored the "noble ancestral hill" and the colonial

23 "The Souvenir," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 5.

24 "Home Personals," Lewiston Evening Journal, 24 September 1883, 3; Poland Spring Centennial, 18.

Hiram Ricker actually passed away on June 4, 1893.
heritage of the "sturdy, rugged New England stock, inbred in the soil, hard working, persistent, energetic, alert, enterprising," who built it up. The oft-repeated story of George and Maturin Riccars' immigration to Dover, New Hampshire, and later death at the hands of the "savage" Indians was rehashed once again. Jabez Ricker and his sons were lauded for laying the foundation for the transformation of "a hill-farm in the forest" into "the great New England Spa." An illustration of a sign bearing Wentworth Ricker's name and the date 1797 commemorated the important role one of those sons had played in opening the Mansion House to the public. Section one went on to provide genealogical information on family members down to the seventh generation -- the grandchildren of Hiram and Janette Ricker and the group designated as the "The Future."  

Section seven of Poland Spring Centennial amounted to a colonial revival tour of the resort. Significantly, the section opened with an illustration of a fireplace scene, a symbol of domestic tranquility made popular by the colonial revival movement. The tour itself began at the Danville Junction railroad depot. Leaving the train, the reader stepped back into the era of stage travel by boarding a Poland Spring coach which covered the final five miles to the resort. After passing through "the thrifty little village" of Danville and taking "an exhilarating ride over a picturesquely undulat-

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25Ibid., 7, 9-21.
ing country," the stage approached the castle-like Poland Spring Hotel. There, in a scene reminiscent of the era when Wentworth Ricker welcomed visitors to the Mansion House, the reader was "met on the hospitable piazza by one of the Ricker brothers, and by manner, if not in words, made welcome with something of the flavor, if not the exuberance, of the old time reception by landlord of guest."²⁶

After an extensive examination of the Poland Spring House and a quick visit to the recently opened, thoroughly modern Maine State Building, the tour moved on to "the veteran Mansion House." Describing the facility as "an ideal country inn," the booklet offered assurances that alterations made to the building over the years had neither "destroyed its quaintness" nor caused it to lose "its mellow charm." Moreover, the souvenir guide played up the facility's inviting vivid contrasts, noting that

the spreading low studded office, the pleasant sitting-rooms, the cozy dining-room, with its cheerful outlook, the homelike rooms above stairs, the piazzas shaded by stately elms of Hiram Ricker's planting, and, withal, the conveniences which modern hotel methods afford, combine to make it a veritable house of contentment.

²⁶Ibid., 69-71.

For analyses of the cultural significance of the fireplace in the colonial revival movement, see Rodris Roth, "The New England, or 'Old Tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit at Nineteenth-Century Fairs," in Colonial Revival in America, 160-83; and Marling, George Washington Slept Here, 35-43.
The contrasts of the "rare old tavern" and "modern hotel" awaited patrons in any season.27

From the Mansion House the stroll proceeded northward along the old county road. The tour passed by a barn dating to 1813, the Albert Ricker homestead, and the Lane cottage, all three of which were pictured, before coming to the Jackson Inn. The souvenir guide explained that Daniel Jackson had built the inn in 1800, making it the second home in town, after the Ricker's Mansion House, to have offered accommodations to the public. As the current owners of the "venerable house," the Rickers were in the process of freshening and remodeling the "good example of early nineteenth century New England" architecture in order to retain "it as an unique feature of [their] many-featured resort."28

Leaving the county road for one that wound to the west around Middle Range Pond, the tour led to another part of the expanding Ricker estate, an "ancient graveyard." One of the reasons for going there was the site's historical associations with the Ricker family. The souvenir guide explained that Poland's first meeting house had once stood beside the cemetery grounds. When the building had been raised sometime in the mid 1790s Molly Ricker, Wentworth's wife, had entertained and fed the workers, "doing all the cooking herself,

27Poland Spring Centennial, 78-9.
28Ibid., 64-7, 80.
using up seven bags of flour, with other things in like proportion."

The second historical tie between the family and the cemetery was the death of one of the people buried there. According to town lore, Dr. Nathaniel Morrill, a guest at the Jackson Inn, had gone out for a walk on the morning of May 8, 1807. Along the way he had encountered a man driving an ox. As the two parties passed, the animal had pinned Morrill with his horns and thrown the doctor to the ground, breaking the man’s back. A picture of Dr. Morrill’s headstone in Poland Spring Centennial attested to "his sudden and melancholy death, Occasioned by an unruly ox." The driver of the violent animal had been none other than Alvan Bolster, the father of Janette Bolster and the future father-in-law of Hiram Ricker.30

Another reason for bringing the reader to the cemetery was to provide a different visual perspective of the resort on the hilltop. Creating a starkly vivid contrast, the colonial revival tour concluded in the "ancient graveyard" looking across Middle Range Pond toward the modern Poland Spring House. As the souvenir guide pointed out and an illustration

30Ibid., 80, 82.

30Ibid., 82.
made clear, from this spot "through the vista of the trees the
great house on the hill appears in the distance, presenting
... a most charming picture."  

John Sears's study of the processes by which tourist
attractions were made sacred during the nineteenth century
suggests several possibilities why the colonial revival tour
described in Poland Spring Centennial would have interested
readers of the booklet and patrons of the resort. Celebrating
the accomplishments of a virtuous American family, especially
one with such a well-established colonial heritage, supplied
one allure. By focusing on the family's time-honored Mansion
House, the booklet also appealed to a sentiment Sears termed
the middle-class cult of the home. By featuring a trip to the
Poland Spring burying ground, it offered readers and patrons,
who had made rural cemeteries popular in many cities and
suburbs, the opportunity to experience an authentic country
antecedent. Furthermore, the visit to the "ancient graveyard"
and Nathaniel Morrill's gravesite, as well as the references
to George and Maturin Ricker's martyrdom, addressed the Ameri­
can desire for antiquities and legendary human tragedies
rivaling those of Europe. In sum, an observation made by
Sears about a different tourist attraction at an earlier time
would have applied just as well to Poland Spring during the
height of the colonial revival: "the curiosity about Provi­
dential happenings, the desire to furnish American places with

31Ibid., 83-4.
legend, the passion for catastrophe, and the love of ruins, account for much of the . . . interest in the story."32

With readers safely returned to the resort, the eighth and final section of Poland Spring Centennial reviewed the great variety of thoroughly up-to-date entertainments available to visitors. More significantly, the guide brought the history of the family and its home to a stirring conclusion by announcing that "when, in the fullness of time, the control falls into the hands of the sons of Hiram Ricker's sons, it will have become indeed a noble inheritance, a monument of sturdy enterprise and sagacity." The final image readers of the souvenir guide were left with was an 1895 picture of the Mansion House -- an attraction made noble by virtue of its age, its state of preservation, and its continuous ownership by the same family for a century.33

Two months after celebrating the centennial of Poland Spring, the three Ricker brothers played leading roles in the celebration of the town of Poland's centennial. Alvan Ricker was one of the five members of the committee charged by the annual town meeting with planning the festivities to be held


Sears was referring to the Willey disaster, an avalanche near Crawford Notch in the New Hampshire White Mountains that killed all seven members of the Samuel Willey family on the evening of August 28, 1826.

33Poland Spring Centennial, 84-9.
on September 11, 1895. Given his experience feeding several hundred guests of the resort each day, it is not surprising that Alvan assumed responsibility for organizing the centennial day dinner. The banquet featured contributions "prepared by the generous and public-spirited women of Poland" and Chase & Sanborn coffee supplied by summer resident James Sanborn. In the estimation of the commemorative book co-authored by Alvan B. Ricker, Bert M. Fernald, and Hiram W. Ricker, "the dinner was one of the finest ever served under a tent." Judging by the illustration that appeared in Poland Centennial, many of the estimated three thousand people attending the celebration crowded under the canvas for a meal."

In addition to his role in the centennial publication, Hiram W. Ricker served as marshal of the centennial parade. In the midst of a brisk morning shower, he and his aides greeted guests arriving for the festivities at the Portland & Rumford Falls depot. Apparently, the auspiciousness of the occasion caused the Rickers to set aside for the day their grudge against the railroad. From the train station, the resplendent marshal, aboard his stately steed, led a procession of parade participants and onlookers from Poland Corner to the town cemetery. There, on what had turned into a

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"Poland Centennial, 1, 25, 27; "Church Record," vol. 4, New Gloucester, ME, 11 September 1895, 367, Shaker Library, United Society of Shakers, New Gloucester, ME.

The Sabbathday Lake Shakers reported that 2200 people partook of the centennial day dinner.
morning of beautiful sunshine, the celebrants honored the "loyal dead." The final stop on the parade route was the fifty by two hundred foot tent where the residents and friends of Poland listened to orations by a succession of speakers before and after the centennial dinner.35

First to address the crowd was President of the Day, Bert M. Fernald. In his welcoming remarks, Fernald discussed what would be the two recurring colonial revival themes of the centennial celebration, the heroism of the town's settlers and the progress of civilization. Contrasting the past century with the era when the "savages" roamed the "primitive" surroundings, this native-born son of Poland commented that since the establishment of the town, "history is replete with the evidences of its progress." Fernald attributed this to the "sturdy" forefathers of Poland who had been "full of courage, ambition, enterprise, and perseverance, true to themselves, their country, and their God."36

At the conclusion of Fernald's speech, the Rev. George F. Durgin, a former resident of Poland, delivered a prayer. The minister thanked God for sustaining the forefathers "in a wild and hostile country" and for assisting them in the establishment of "those institutions which have made glorious the history of New England." The singing of the centennial hymn then followed. The lyrics composed by the Rev. Frederic

35Poland Centennial, 1.

Newport described the review of the century past as "the sacred task." Through song, celebrants were called upon to "Recall the honored names/Of noble sires and dames," "tell of the industry/Of sturdy yeomanry," and "Tell of the church and school/That gave true civic rule."37

With the opening ceremonies concluded, Bert Fernald introduced the Orator of the Day, W. W. McCann. McCann opened his talk on the history of Poland with a discussion of progress. By progress he meant the "advancing forces of civilization," such as those that had enabled the conquering white man to triumph over the savage life of the Indian. According to McCann, progress, symbolized by the westward moving "star of Empire," manifested itself in Poland as "thought, ideas, the school, and the church -- the best forces of New England civilization." He also touched upon the other main theme of the day, filiopietism, paying tribute to the "hardy, industrious New England stock." McCann contrasted the colonial aims of this group -- clearing farm land and building homes, schools, and churches -- with those of "the old Spanish explorers" -- pursuing gold and glory. McCann left no doubt which group of colonists he believed had turned out the richer.38

37George F. Durgin, "Prayer," in Ibid., 8-9; Frederick Newport, "Centennial Hymn," in Ibid., 10.


McCann's use of the term empire drew laughter from the audience. Undoubtedly, McCann and many members of the audience found it humorous that the settlement of the town
McCann extended accolades to one Poland family of ancient lineage in particular. Referring to the recent centennial celebration at Poland Spring, the Orator of the Day acknowledged "the magnificent success of the Rickers." McCann related to the audience the story of how a century earlier the family had unwittingly entered the hotel business by taking in a "weary and hungry traveler" who had been turned away from the nearby Shaker community. While prosperity and fame had followed from that act of hospitality by the Rickers, McCann invited people to "recall on this our natal day, with greater pride and satisfaction, their honest, intelligent, generous, and patriotic citizenship." The audience responded to the request to honor nonmaterialistic values with hearty applause.  

Explaining that men had neglected "the less noisy and unostentatious triumphs of women," McCann at this point in his speech singled out one member of the family for special tribute -- Janette Ricker. A great admirer of her work, the speaker recited the many duties Janette had assumed during her lifetime: landlady, hostess, cook, housewife, mother and neighbor. McCann observed that "her wise counsel, executive ability, and uncompromising integrity did much in giving tone and direction to the affairs on Ricker Hill." Applause from

began in East Poland, one section of which was known as the Empire, and moved westward.

"Ibid., 13, 21-2."
the audience affirmed the accuracy of the speaker's assessment. McCann summed up his brief biography of Janette Ricker with the comment that "her life and work remain, not only a precious memory, but an inspiration to wives and mothers who shall succeed her in those splendid homes."\(^{40}\)

Despite the praise for this remarkable woman, McCann ended his lengthy oration on the history of Poland by celebrating the clear definition of gender roles that had prevailed during the pioneer past. He recalled with pride "the early struggles and sturdy manliness of those of an earlier day." McCann romanticized about "the manly, determined bridegroom," who toiled in the summer heat, braved the storms of winter, enlarged his fields, improved and beautified his home, and endured hardships un mur muringly. As for the "fair and no less determined bride," he loved to think of her "singing merrily as the birds," plying the shuttle, preparing the frugal meal, teaching the first-born to talk, and "in structing him in his letters." McCann's epitaph for "the pioneers of these Northern woodlands" was: "They did the best they could with their surroundings -- angels could do no more."\(^{41}\)

After a break for dinner, Maine Congressman Nelson Ding ley addressed the sons and daughters of Poland. He began his speech by telling the audience that he regarded history as

\(^{40}\)Ibid., 24, 26.

\(^{41}\)Ibid., 26.
"philosophy teaching by example." He reasoned, therefore, that "the story of the past is valuable only as it illuminates the path of the future." When Dingley speculated about what lay ahead, he foresaw only continued progress -- progress measured in the growth of population, the increase in wealth, the advance of national power, and the spread of Anglo-Saxon civilization. The Congressman encouraged his listeners to carry on this legacy by telling them that "the noble blood which coursed in the veins of our forefathers has not lost its vigor or character." Dingley concluded his address by urging people to "be true to the great principles which animated the fathers." The audience reportedly responded to Dingley's call with great enthusiasm.42

Introduced as a "distinguished and progressive son of Poland" and "her greatest benefactor," an ailing Edward Ricker came before the crowd to express his "love of our forefathers and the good old town." The remainder of his abbreviated presentation consisted of two prophecies about the year 1995. The first was that during the next one hundred years Maine would see tenfold progress and development, eventually making it "the great playground of this country." Ricker's second prophecy was more universal. He predicted that by the end of the second millennium "the form of our Republican Government will be established throughout the world." Appropriately

enough, Edward Ricker concluded his "few rambling remarks" by drinking a toast of Poland Water to the audience's health."

The next speaker, the Rev. J. Albert Libby, honored Poland by reciting a poem he had composed for the occasion. The poetic review of Poland's historic people and places included forty lines devoted to the Ricker family. Although Libby generally celebrated the century of progress that had brought prosperity to the Ricker boys and pride to the townspeople, he also expressed a certain longing for old times. On Ricker Hill the poet found the stability of the past preserved in two places, the Mansion House and the spring. About the former, Libby mused:

The Ricker Hill, what early used to be,
Must now be known with all antiquity,
Though hidden in the mansion pile, we know,
Is the old house of ten decades ago.

Similarly, the minister's tribute to the unchanging constancy of the water observed that "The living spring, however, yet remains,/The one unfailing source of all the gains.""

Because of their perceived ability to tame wilderness and control progress, the unambiguous heroes of many of Poland's centennial day orations were the town's white settlers. J. C. Davis, for one, credited "the progress of the last hundred years" to the "heroic and stalwart, men of stout hearts and strong hands" who "cleared the land, erected buildings,

"E. P. Ricker, in Ibid., 32-4.
stocked their farms, fenced their fields, [and] fed and clothed their large families of children." His vision of Poland's past was one in which the hard work and ingenuity of yeomen farmers, not modern industrial machinery, had transformed savage aboriginal wilderness into civilized agricultural landscape. As Davis reminded listeners, the colonists had achieved their accomplishments without the benefit of corn planters, cultivators, steel plows, horse rakes, mowing machines, or threshers. He added that "they ploughed the ground, planted, tilled and harvested their crops, and threshed their grain, all by hand labor, and with implements of the rudest kind, many of which were made by themselves."*45

Presenting the final toast of the day, J. W. Penney spoke on the topic of Poland's early settlers. This member of the Maine Historical Society opened his talk by commenting on the importance of reviving the colonial past. Penney quoted Macaulay's dictum that "a people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors, will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered by remote descendants." Linking history with heredity, he added "the people who do keep green the memory and deeds of their ancestors, are a people in whose veins runs the noblest and richest blood of the earth." Penney used the development of the "trait" of historical awareness as a gauge by which to measure the "plane

"J. C. Davis, "Reminiscences of East Poland," in Ibid., 68.
of civilization and refinement" attained by groups of people. Highly developed civilizations produced histories, he reasoned; lesser developed ones perpetuated myths and legends."

Despite the myths and legends told about Poland, particularly the ones flowing from the hilltop, Penney made clear on which plane he placed the history of New England. The local historian reverently proclaimed:

To the New Engander of to-day, there is a halo of exquisite romance that entwines the memory of the early settler, so full of stirring incident, heroic achievement and sublime faith, that it charms and thrills and stirs the emotions of the soul, promoting patriotism and love of country, and inciting to nobler living.

When it came time to praise Poland's principal mythologizers, Penney noted that the Ricker's "ancestral tree sprang from Saxon soil." Assessing a century of hotelkeeping on Ricker Hill, he congratulated the family for having "developed the rugged old hill into a sanitarium, world-renowned, a paradise of health, a thing of beauty and a joy forever." Penney concluded by honoring Poland's unknown heroes, the early settlers who, like the Rickers, were "descendants of the Puritan stock, ... God-fearing, brave, patriotic, honest, lowly toilers."

Following the texts of the thirteen addresses, orations, prayers, poems, and toasts, the compilers of Poland Centennial added a brief tribute of their own to the Poland Spring

"J. W. Penney, "The Early Settlers," in Ibid., 78, 80.
"Ibid., 80, 86."
resort. It lauded the "celebrated Poland Mineral Spring," commended the energy of the three Ricker brothers, complimented "the noble dimensions of the Poland Spring House," and praised the wealthy and intelligent patrons of the establishment. The tribute also invoked the two colonial revival themes of the centennial celebration, filiopietism and progress. Wentworth Ricker was acknowledged as having opened "the quaint and hospitable Mansion House" in 1797, while his grandson, Hiram W. Ricker, was cited for his interest "in advancing the educational interests and all that pertains to the welfare of his native town."  

"Prepare Your Own Family Chart"

One of the consequences of the nostalgia excited by the two centennial celebrations held in 1895 was a heightened interest in the Rickers' genealogy. On October 21, 1896, for example, George H. Haynes presented a paper on the history of the family to the Maine Genealogical Society. Borrowing liberally from *Poland Spring Centennial*, Haynes told the group about the family's Saxon lineage, George and Maturin Riccar's immigration to Dover, New Hampshire, Jabez's move to Poland, Maine, Wentworth's establishment of the first Ricker inn, and Hiram's discovery of the spring. In the second half of his presentation, Haynes quoted long passages from the essay on *Poland Spring W. H. H. Murray had written six years earlier.

"Ibid., 90, 92."
Thus, members of the society heard about "the biological principle of transmitted forces and power" and the "hotel blood" in the Ricker family. 49

Further evidence of the popularity of genealogy was the notice in the July 4, 1897 issue of the Hill-Top, reporting that interest in family history had "grown remarkably" in recent years. Playing upon fears of anonymity that plagued moderns, the paper warned that "to be without a Genealogical Chart is to be an isolated being." Playing as well upon the status anxieties of old-stock Americans, an advertisement in the same issue announced that "all who have any respect for themselves and their families keep such records." Placed by Charles O. Bass of New York City, the ad offered for sale at twenty cents each or three for fifty cents the same genealogical forms as used in England. Bass specifically addressed his appeal "to the Sons and Daughters of the Revolution, Colonial Dames and all kindred societies, and to every father and mother in America." As an additional inducement to take up the hobby, the paper maintained that the fascinating pastime was better than the fads of "collecting stamps, coins, or china." Finally, the Hill-Top directed those interested in fulfilling their duty to the American Genealogical Index, a reference book the resort library had recently acquired. 50

50 "Genealogy," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 3; "Genealogy," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 14; "Mr. Hartshorne's Gift," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 3; "Historical China," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 30.
As Bass’s ad indicated, the interest in genealogy during the closing decades of the nineteenth century gave rise to the popularity of hereditary societies. Membership in the dozen such organizations founded during the 1890s, the highpoint of the colonial revival, was restricted to individuals who could verify their colonial ancestry. Enrollment in just one of these societies, the Colonial Dames, soared from 818 charter members in 1890 to over 35,000 in 1901. The editors of the Hill-Top supported the cause by asking readers from time to time whether they belonged to the group.51

The children of Hiram and Janette Ricker proudly claimed their birthrights in the leading hereditary societies of the day. Nettie Ricker applied for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1895. Citing William Lapham’s History of Rumford as her authority, she based her application on the service of her maternal great-great-grandfather, Captain Isaac Bolster, in the Revolutionary War. A resident of Uxbridge, Massachusetts, Capt. Bolster had responded to the

In spite of the slight against collecting china, the Hill-Top did run advertisements for historical plates sold by Jones, McDuffee and Stratton of Boston, Massachusetts. An 1899 ad listed for sale many plates depicting colonial New England scenes.


For more on the history of hereditary societies, see Wallace Evan Davies, Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans’ and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).
alarm sounded on the epochal day of April 19, 1775, marching off to defend Concord and take his place in history. Nettie’s older sister, Cynthia Marsh, who already was a member of the Mercy Warren Chapter of the DAR in Springfield, Massachusetts, cosponsored the nomination.52

During the same period, a genealogy establishing the Rickers’ eligibility for membership in the Society of Mayflower Descendants was prepared. It traced back nine generations to Pilgrims Isaac and Mary Allerton, the former of whom had been one of the signers of the Mayflower Compact. When the Maine chapter of the organization was launched in 1901, the Rickers stood ready to assist. In 1905, for example, Edward, Alvan, and Hiram Ricker hosted a banquet for members of the Maine Mayflower Society at "ye" Poland Spring House.53


Cynthia Ella Ricker Marsh was member number 6826 of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.


An invitation to the 1905 banquet of "ye Societie of Mayflower Descendants in ye State of Maine" appears as an illustration in Poland Spring Remembered. According to this
Although it was the Ricker family genealogy that received almost all of the attention from promoters of the Poland Spring resort, it was actually Janette Bolster's ancestry that gained her children admission to the hereditary societies. A biographical entry on Hiram Ricker prepared in 1903 for the New England Historical Publishing Company revealed the disparity in prominence between the two families. The most famous colonial ancestor linked to the Rickers was William Wentworth, a cousin of Ann Hutchinson, a follower of John Wheelwright, and a cofounder of Exeter, New Hampshire. While Hiram's children could lay claim to Antinomian ancestry through their father, through their mother's family they descended from a Minute Man and seven Mayflower passengers. Besides Capt. Bolster and the Allertons, another of Janette's notable ancestors was Robert Cushman. In the estimation of the New England Historical Publishing Company, Cushman was "more nearly the father of the English Colonies in America than any other one man," since he had advised the Pilgrims to sail from Holland to the New World.  

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same source, the Ricker brothers belonged to the Sons of the American Revolution, too. Entries in the National Cyclopaedia of American Biography confirm the membership of Alvan and Hiram in the Mayflower Society. An extant membership card indicates that their sister, Sarah Ricker, was a life member of the organization at least as of the 1930s.

"Hiram Ricker," New England Historical Publishing Company, TMs, 1903, AHS; George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 4-5; Poland Spring Centennial, 16-7.
Old Home Week

In addition to genealogy, commemorative celebrations, and hereditary societies, another interest of colonial revivalists was the preservation of old homes. This made the oldest building at Poland Spring -- the Mansion House -- the focus of much attention. The venerable structure's place in the built environment was more complicated than as a repository for antimodernism. Instead like so much else at the resort, the building was a study in vivid contrasts. Its antiquity gave it an undeniably proud past. Yet, the proprietors wanted to make perfectly clear that the facility also featured the latest modern amenities. Thus, the Mansion House functioned as both a preserve of antimodern domesticity and piety in its roles as home and Sunday School at the same time it functioned as a promoter of modern leisure, consumption, and commerce in its roles as hotel, water office, and post office.

The transformation from home and inn to hotel and home proceeded between the 1869 and 1870 seasons. During that period, workmen raised the roof and added a full third story to the Mansion House, increasing its capacity to fifteen rooms. Two years later, removal of the old wood and cider houses and extension of the ell at the back of the structure added seven more rooms. All the while, Edward Ricker dreamed
of building "a boarding-house of a little larger scope on the Hill."

Even with the fulfillment of the dream in 1876, the Rickers continued to expand the Mansion House to meet "the business requirements" of running a popular resort. The building was enlarged again in 1883, bringing the room count up to sixty-six. A visitor to the facility nearly a decade later was struck by its vivid contrasts. The journalist described the facility as "ideal in its adoption of modern notions, and in the quaint, beloved associations with the days of sweet Lang Syne." The reporter observed that this combination made the inn "especially dear to some of the older folks, who do not care for the bustle and life of a modern, fashionable hotel such as that set on the hill."

In large part, a homelike atmosphere gave the Mansion House its distinctive charm. The journalist duly noted that the building continued to serve as the residence of Hiram Ricker. Its architectural features added to the ambience of domesticity. Enormous fireplaces, comfortable rooms, a beautiful little dining room, and enormous elms created a

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55Poland Spring Centennial, 63; A[rthur] G. S[taples], The Inner Man ([Lewiston, ME]: Privately printed, 1923), 27.

56"The Mansion House," Hill-Top, 6 September 1896, 2; Poland Spring Centennial, 60; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8.
cozy, quiet, and serene setting that made the inn a home away from home, beloved by all who stayed there.57

The same attributes that made the Mansion House such an inviting place to escape the hustle and bustle of the mundane world also made it an ideal spot for Sarah Ricker to conduct Sunday School classes. In 1896 Sarah, who went by the nickname Sadie, organized the Hill-Side Sunday School with Pamela Leonard, Hiram W. Ricker’s personal secretary, and Grace Hall. The trio held sessions in one of the parlors for as many as twenty-seven students from January through June. The school closed for the tourist season, reopening when the summer traffic died down at the end of September.58

Outward appearances of domesticity and piety, however, disguised the more commercial, behind-the-scenes activities that took place in the Mansion House. The facility also served as an office from which the younger Hiram Ricker

57Ibid.


Concluding that the Mansion House was not big enough to accommodate both the children and the guests, Sarah soon moved the Sunday School into a nearby school house. The Sunday School relocated again in 1912 to the newly opened All Souls’ Chapel across from the Maine State Building. Sarah served as superintendent until 1928. During her long tenure, the motherly Sadie, who never married and thus, had no children of her own, became dearly beloved for the deep interest and sincere affection she showed toward her pupils. The picnics and Christmas parties she organized for them were especially remembered with fondness.
managed the operations of both the inn and the spring. From a suite of four offices behind the front desk, Ricker and his staff recorded the "immense sales" of Poland Water. As local postmaster, Hiram also presided over the South Poland post office which occupied a fifth room in the suite."

Given the contrasts embodied in the building, promoting the Mansion House confounded the editors of the Hill-Top. One season it was "a roadside inn, erected by sturdy pioneers," "an object lesson in enterprise," and a monument to the virtues of thrift, perseverance, and good judgment. A few years later, the "time-honored Mansion House" and "ancient hostelry of by-gone days" was passe. In its place, stood "the Mansion House of to-day." There, in time for the 1898 season, electric illumination replaced gas; new baths replaced old; and Falstaffian room proportions replaced straight-laced precursors. In addition, among the twenty-seven rooms added to the by now sprawling complex were a sun parlor and kitchen designed to fulfill the therapeutic needs of the "inner man."

The paper imagined that if Wentworth Ricker could return and

""Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8; George H. Haynes, The State of Maine, in 1893 (New York: Moss Engraving Company, 1893), 41; "A Notable Improvement," Hill-Top, 3 July 1898, 2; Mansion House, South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, [1899], unpaginated; "Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 185, 198, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME.
see the transformation of his inn, the presence of all the modern innovations and improvements would bewilder him.60

Such a reincarnation was no more the point of the colonial revival as practiced at Poland Spring than was trying to re-create for patrons some version of the good old days. The ultimate aim of the movement was to make modernity less bewildering to moderns. The solution was the middle landscape of the city of vivid contrasts. In the case of the built environment, the manifestation of the vivid contrasts was the modern yet quaint Mansion House. By the end of the century, promotional literature repeatedly harped upon this duality. An 1899 announcement for the Mansion House, for example, described it as "improved and modernized" and yet, still preserving "that air and architecture so quaint and attractive in these old houses." Similarly, an 1899 article in the Hill-Top referred to "The Old Homestead" as "this modernized yet quaint old hostelry."61

In the retrospective mood befitting the approach of a new century, the editors of the Hill-Top attempted to explain the seemingly paradoxical juxtaposition. The crux of the matter was the American "desire for change," and more specifically, for that change to be progressive. Likening change to "parting with old friends," the paper used the example of a

60"The Mansion House," Hill-Top, 6 September 1896, 2; "A Notable Improvement," Hill-Top, 3 July 1898, 2.

61Mansion House, ([1899]), unpaginated; "A 'Parlor Car' Winter," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 3.
reconstructed fireplace and chimney to offer assurances that "a careful hand preserved each specimen of the handicraft of early times." The all-purpose concept of purity, which was never defined but often mentioned in conjunction with the spring, ensured that change became progress. An unchanging and fixed absolute, much like the water of the spring, the purity of craftsmanship produced a new fireplace that retained its old character. The same principle also kept producing a new, more modern, Mansion House that still retained the most elemental qualities of the old -- hospitality and quaintness -- despite continual alterations. Preserving purity when combining the vivid contrasts distinguished mere change from true progress.62

Colonial revivalists often linked the ideal of purity with the past through architecture. In his study of the movement, Vincent J. Scully, Jr., has observed that during the 1870s colonial architecture was viewed "as the concrete embodiment of a supposedly purer, certainly simpler, age." Significantly, Scully also associated the rise of the summer resort to this same search for purity, describing "the resort as a place close to that pure and romantic nature which the Hudson River School painters had made known." In an essay on the impact of the colonial revival in the seacoast region of New Hampshire, Dona Brown has found a similar connection between colonial architecture, tourism, and purity. She has

written that "for such people as [Nelson] Page and [Thomas Bailey] Aldrich, the great houses of the Piscataqua region were representatives of earlier, purer times -- and of a racial heritage of which they could be proud."63

A 1900 article appearing in the Hill-Top during Maine’s annual Old Home Week elaborated on the concept of purity as it related to colonial revival architecture. Observing that "the architecture of old New England is a sermon that is too often neglected," the paper commended the Massachusetts commissioners to the Columbian Exposition for having decided to reproduce the colonial Hancock mansion as the state’s exhibit hall. The periodical maintained that "it typified not only the austere and pure mind of John Hancock, but of a whole nation whose being is due to the era of our puritanical forefathers." The editors conjured up the specter of Hancock in the article and imagined him pointing to the mansion and saying: "There you see symbolized the true democracy -- quiet, elegant and refined, and capable in itself of arousing a love for the pure and an abhorrence of the fickle in life."64

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64 "Old Homes," Hill-Top, 5 August 1900, 1-2; Rhoads, Colonial Revival, 126-8; Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, "Curious Relics and Quaint Scenes: The Colonial Revival at Chicago’s Great Fair," in Colonial Revival in America, 185-7.
The tribute to the Massachusetts exhibition hall at the Chicago World’s Fair served as a prelude to the intended focus of the Hill-Top article -- the remodeled Mansion House. Although filled with more modern conveniences, the "old wayside inn" still retained "its colonial aspect." Entering the office from the front entrance, guests saw to the right the much discussed new fireplace made of old bricks. The walls throughout the room were still held together by the original hand-forged nails and hand-hewed timbers. At the foot of the staircase leading to the second floor was the entrance to the old parlor, "where even the ancient finish" was preserved."\(^{65}\)

Ascending to the next level, visitors found two "charming old rooms," the guest and family chambers. The former still featured the same old rail, wainscotting, and framing. The latter continued to evoke nostalgic memories as the birthplace of so many Ricker children. Drawing the tour to a close, the editors of the Hill-Top informed readers that "it is the effort of the owners to enhance, to perfect, and to idealize the home of their ancestry -- to make a modern inn, still preserving the atmosphere of the old." The Rickers stated that they did this not only to satisfy their guests, but also "to make real the traditions of those who went before us, and whose sturdy and magnificent character and courage was the

\(^{65}\)Hill-Top, 5 August 1900, 2-3.
foundation on which was laid all the great enterprises which have startled the older world."6

The themes addressed in the article explain the appeal of the colonial revival to the Rickers and their patrons. The movement was about love for the pure and abhorrence of the fickle, the former associated with the past, the latter with the present. Furthermore, it was about preserving the best features of the old ways while simultaneously promoting the progress of the modern age. Finally, it was about honoring and carrying on the traditions, sturdiness, character, and courage -- in short, the noble inheritance -- passed down from their ancestors.

The Rickers' use of the term "noble inheritance" indicates the meaning the present generation attached to the past. The value placed on the colonial era derived from its perceived nobility. In the midst of the unprecedented influx of foreign immigrants during the late nineteenth century, many old-stock Americans were reminded that their colonial forbearers had paid a high price for the opportunity to pursue happiness, having struggled against hardships to civilize the wilderness and having sometimes even sacrificed their lives to conquer the Indians. Colonial revivalists strongly believed, therefore, that the Anglo-Saxon and early American ancestry of families such as the Rickers ought to convey privileged status

"Ibid., 3.
upon them, for both historical and hereditary reasons. Celia Betsky has argued that this social class practiced the new religion of ancestor worship in order to create "a kind of nobility of native origins." In effect, people such as the Rickers used the notion of an ethnically pure past not only to maintain the social exclusivity of the resort, but more importantly, to defend their cultural authority in American society.67

The children of Hiram and Janette Ricker laid claim to this portion of their legacy by researching their genealogy, telling their family history, displaying their coat of arms, celebrating local centennials, joining hereditary societies, and preserving old buildings. By reviving the past, they also added to the vivid contrasts of the Poland Spring resort. More than antimodern nostalgia, however, drove the colonial revival movement. It was also informed by the desire for progress. Out of the noble inheritance embodied by the Mansion House, therefore, came the equally noble dream to crown the hilltop with a modern hotel.

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CHAPTER IV


In contrast to the Mansion House, which primarily evoked a noble past, the Poland Spring House stood as a monument to modernity. Heralding its "magnificent proportions," beautiful design, and perfect appointments, the Rickers promoted the hotel as one of the leading "modern summer houses." The so-called "Mecca of the fashion, the wealth and culture of the country" legitimated modern conceptions of leisure and consumption. The building also displayed the benefits of modern progress through the application of the latest technology. Furthermore, it demonstrated the growth of modern commerce in its role as headquarters of an ever-expanding corporate empire. Besides functioning as social mecca, technological show place, and commercial counting house, the facility also served as a sanctuary from modernity in its roles as genteel home and noble castle. Thus, beneath the hotel's facade of modernity lay more of the vivid contrasts that made Poland Spring a "veritable paradise" to so many visitors.¹

¹Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 68.
As early as 1860, a local reporter writing about a trip to the newly popular water source at Poland Spring observed that "a hotel on the spot is what is wanted." Lack of funds made pursuit of the suggestion infeasible at the time, and for many years to come. With the family homestead mortgaged and its ownership in dispute, securing credit and finding investors was difficult. Local banks refused to loan money to Edward Ricker after he took charge of the family business in 1869. Mechanics Savings Bank of Auburn only approved a $5500 mortgage on the three-hundred-acre farm in 1875 when his uncle, John R. Pulsifer of Poland, agreed to cosign. A year later, Edward and Alvan Ricker persuaded Albert S. Young, the well-known coproprietor of the successful Elm House in Auburn, to finance their plan for a new hotel at Poland Spring. The brothers entered into a partnership with Young that called for him to pay half the construction and operating costs in exchange for half ownership in the venture. The Rickers reserved, however, the option to buy Young out within six years.²

With the finances of the project seemingly squared away, attention turned to the critical consideration of location.

²"A Trip to Poland and the Mineral Spring," Lewiston Falls Journal, 20 July 1860; Arthur G. Staples, The Inner Man ([Lewiston, ME]: Privately printed, 1923), 27; Poland Spring Centennial, 63; "Before Poland Became Famous," Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 1-5 February 1908, 8; Deeds, Book 69, 453; Book 90, 195-7, Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds, County Building, Auburn, ME, (hereafter ACRD).
The partners selected the top of Ricker Hill, a spot that proved to be ideal for two reasons. First, situated nearly half way between the Mansion House and the Spring House, the building would be within easy walking distance, less than a quarter of a mile, of the two most frequented sites at the resort. Second, the elevation provided magnificent views of a "rich landscape, extending unbroken to the horizon."³

On January 26, 1876, the Rickers and Young contracted with Hiram Dinsmore and Jeremiah Philbrook to build the proposed hotel. Working with "speed and thoroughness" from plans rendered by architects John Calvin Stevens and George M. Coombs, masons laid the foundation and built seven chimneys; carpenters framed and finished the structure using 337,000 feet of lumber and 125 casks of nails; plasterers covered 15,000 yards of lathe; plumbers hooked up yards of gas piping, steam fixtures, and water works; and painters added gallons of white and green paint to clapboards and blinds. In all, eighty craftsmen and laborers contributed 1900 workdays to the project, completing the building in less than four months.⁴

³Elizabeth Cromley, "A Room with a View," in Resorts of the Catskills (New York: The Architectural League of New York, the Gallery Association of New York State, and St. Martin's Press, 1979), 13-28; Poland Spring Centennial, 70.

⁴Deed, Book 90, 195, ACRD; "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876.
Working at such speed did not come cheap. The structure had cost $23,000 to build; finishing and furnishing it brought the total to between $35,000 and $40,000. In order to pay for the project, the Rickers had to take out a $12,000 mortgage on the farm from the Union Mutual Life Insurance Company in Portland. Even this loan, some of which was used to pay off the year-old mortgage from Mechanics Savings Bank, could not cover all the remaining expenses. With funds again running low and the summer season drawing near, Edward Ricker relied on credit from the Lewiston firm of Bradford and Conant to outfit the hotel. To save money, he even hauled some of the one hundred carpets and chamber sets used to furnish the facility back to Poland Spring aboard the family’s hay rack.5

The Poland Spring House opened on June 21, 1876 with little fanfare. Only one line announced the event in the Lewiston newspaper. The following day, Edward Ricker and Albert Young "politely escorted" seventeen guests from the Sabbathday Lake Shaker community "through the whole establishment." They toured through a building composed of two perpendicular wings that met to form an L. One wing measured 114 feet and faced northwest; the other measured 148 feet and faced southeast.

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For more on the career of John Calvin Stevens, see John Calvin Stevens II and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., John Calvin Stevens: Domestic Architecture, 1890-1930 (Scarborough, ME: Harp Publications, 1990).

5Ibid.; Deeds, Book 69, 453; Book 84, 65-7, ACRD; "Poland Once Again," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 2-3; Staples, Inner Man, 27.
faced southwest. Within these confines, the facility provided accommodations for an additional two hundred guests at Poland Spring. Without, piazzas totaling 450 feet, 360 feet at ground level plus another 90 feet on the upper floors, fronted the hotel. The wings joined at the visual centerpiece of the structure, the prominent six-story tower capped by a French roof.6

With its commanding architectural elements, fine domestic furnishings, and latest technological innovations, the finished hotel furthered Poland Spring's reputation. One of the first visitors to view the building, a reporter from the Lewiston paper, declared it a "first-class" hotel "worthy of Long Branch and Newport." In contrast, long after the newness of the original edifice had faded, the Hill-Top in 1903 unflatteringly remembered it as a "crude, square, unornamented structure of four as plain stories as any beach resort, with a square, simple tower," hardly a facility that would have befit what had become by now a sophisticated summer city. To retain the much coveted first-class designation, the Rickers

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had to renovate, reinvent, and modernize the Poland Spring House constantly. 

Genteel House

The proprietors of the Poland Spring House relied on more than the name of the building to create an appealing homelike setting for their patrons. Although on a much grander scale and in more numerous quantity, the hotel contained most of the rooms found in a typical Victorian house owned by an urban, upper-middle-class family during the Gilded Age. The piazza, or veranda, marked the transition from the public world of the street to the private world of the home. Both residents and guests entered into a ceremonial room -- a hall in a house, the lobby in the hotel -- where acquaintances and strangers exhibited their best genteel behavior. In each type of building, the first floor contained specialized rooms for socializing, dining, and entertaining. Upper floors provided space for more private functions such as sleeping and bathing. The remotest regions of the Victorian house, whether it be a single-family dwelling or a multifamily hotel, were the unseen work places and living quarters of the servants responsible for most of the domestic chores.


Ideally, the spatial specialization built into the genteel home of the late nineteenth century mediated the experience of the competitive secular world. For Victorian adults, home was "the shrine of the family affections" glorified by God. As one perennial Poland Spring patron expressed the sentiment, "to elevate and purify the life of the home ought to be an ambition worthy of the highest endowments." Social convention typically assigned this role to women, who were deemed the "true guardians" of the home. For children, the "cult of domesticity" presided over by pious mothers created a "walled garden" that shielded them from corrupting outside influences. With each remove into the interior of the house, the family retreated further into a world of privacy and purity. This conception of domesticity gave to the Victorian home an air of antimodern escape.9

For many houses, the Poland Spring House included, the veranda provided the first line of protection from the outside

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world. In its function as a transitional space, the veranda separated the natural outdoors from the artificial indoors and the informal resort grounds from the formal hotel interior. When the hotel first opened, a promotional announcement invited guests to take in "the most beautiful landscape scenery in New England [sic]" from the piazza. Sometimes they did so to the accompanying strains of music played by the Lewiston brigade band, which stationed itself on the piazza and serenaded passersby. In addition to serving as a vantage point for viewing nature and a platform for listening to music, the veranda, with its rows of rocking chairs, provided a comfortable setting for observing human nature. A reporter surveying such a scene in 1892 noted that the site was "alive with young folk's talk." The journalist and an accompanying photographer documented that the piazza was also a favorite after dinner haunt of the older set. There patrons chatted, gossiped, eavesdropped, read, gazed, daydreamed, smoked, and dozed.  

Another visitor to Poland Spring, Lida A. Churchill, described in 1894 the range of activities she had experienced on the verandas that by this time totaled nearly 1300 feet. Churchill recalled rhapsodically the entrancing view she had beheld: the piercing White Mountains, "shrubbery encircled" Range Lakes, "noble forest trees," and peaceful Maine homes. In addition, Churchill reported approvingly that all the world conversed like brothers on the veranda. She claimed to have found at Poland Spring "the military Russian, the urbane Frenchman, the practical German, [and] the count of Italy" engaged in fraternal discussions. Churchill also encountered other stock characters as she traversed the veranda: "languorous, handsome daughters and chivalrous sons" of the South, New Yorkers putting aside their commercial cares, and "cultivated, Ibsenistic" Bostonians laying down abstruse volumes to drink in the "mysterious elixir of life."

The veranda not only provided unsurpassed opportunities for observation and ample space for promenading, it also served as a greeting point. As arriving guests disembarked from stages, one of the Ricker brothers would sometimes welcome them on the "hospitable piazza." The gesture was

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"Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 2.
intended to recall "something of the flavor . . . of the old
time reception by landlord of guest."\textsuperscript{12}

In 1876 guests could enter the Poland Spring House in two
places. The southwest entrance led into the lobby, where
Leander Stevens, an experienced hotel manager and the father
of one of the building's architects, attended to affairs. In
Victorian fashion, the room of "first impressions" sought to
impress patrons with a "fine counter" and walnut and ash
columns that terminated "at the ceiling in a broad cornice of
the same woods." Beyond the front desk, a wide stairwell
ascended to the upper floors. In the opinion of one reporter,
it was "probably the finest hotel office in Maine."\textsuperscript{13}

Not fine enough to suit the Rickers, however. In order
to create "a homelike air" amidst the vastness of the "great
office hall," they had the lobby entirely renovated and
reconfigured in time for the 1887 season. Workmen pushed the
entrance out four feet to create a bay surrounded with plate
glass windows, moved the location of the front desk to the
back of the room, and constructed a rear entrance for easier
access to the baggage elevator. In addition, they laid a
floor with alternating bands of light and dark hardwoods;
added "highly polished, massive, modern oak counters," desks,

\textsuperscript{12}Poland Spring Centennial, 71.

\textsuperscript{13}"Obituary: Leander Stevens," \textit{Eastern Argus}, 28 November
1903; "Poland Mineral Spring," \textit{Lewiston Evening Journal}, 10
June 1876; Kenneth L. Ames, \textit{Death in the Dining Room and Other
Tales of Victorian Culture} (Philadelphia: Temple University
Press, 1992), 7-43.
and stairways; and finished the room "with oak in antique design." To the immediate right of the new counter area appeared a six-foot-wide "huge domed fireplace" finished in terra cotta. Resident painter William Thresher added a "much admired" United States shield above the oak mantle.\footnote{Poland Spring Centennial, 72; Poland Spring Hotels (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1887), unpaginated; Hill-Top, 17 July 1898, 22.}

The friendly service extended by the attentive staff bustling about the lobby also made visitors feel at home. The desk clerk assured new arrivals that he had saved them the "most desirable room in the house." The express clerk promised prompt delivery of baggage. Another employee informed guests about the availability of cigars, the schedule for the baseball team, and the publication of the newspaper. From season to season, the cashier's face was a familiar one. The smiling postmistress handed out letters without having to be asked. The bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked telegraph operator freely exchanged pleasantries. The same bell-boy as last year stood ready to serve. A porter extended his sincere greetings like an old friend. Even Edward Ricker himself made guests feel "at home" with assurances "that the whole house" was theirs.\footnote{"Pleasure and Comfort at Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 5.}

In 1876 the northwest entrance to the hotel placed guests in a spacious corridor that separated the ladies' parlors.
Described as the "quintessential Victorian room," parlor design, decor, and behavior was shaped by the values of domesticity and gentility. In such "cozy corners," guests conversed, rested, read, and wrote. More significantly, they displayed there the traits of genteel character -- morality, propriety, and self-control.16

"Parlor people" expected the setting to exhibit culture, as well as provide comfort. Thus, an exotic and eclectic cosmopolitanism emanating from the desire of cultivated Victorians to appear "at home in the world" redirected the conservatism of insular domesticity and orderly gentility. The result was a domestic consumerism and genteel commercialism that equated abundant personal possessions with upstanding personal character. The accompanying riot of fabrics and furnishings and "bricabracomania" unleashed by this materialistic bent came to define the Victorian parlor.17

The rooms in the Poland Spring House exuded the cosmopolitanism, consumerism, and commercialism that produced the palace parlor. Over the years, the Rickers transformed these

16Poland Spring Centennial, 72; Halttunen, "From Parlor to Living Room," 160-1; Ames, Death in the Dining Room, 190-3; Katherine C. Grier, "The Decline of the Memory Palace: The Parlor after 1890," in American Home Life, 50-4.

settings of genteel behavior into show places of artistic beauty and conspicuous consumption. Large plate glass windows provided "unequalled scenic pictures" of the landscape. As the setting sun reflected off the western sky, its light seemed to turn the windows into masses of "almost liquid diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and turquoise." Stained glass windows added to the kaleidoscope of color. Opposite the scenes of natural beauty hung artistic representations. Paintings of poppies by Abbott Graves, New England autumn and springtime scenes by John J. Enneking, and apple blossoms by Adelaide Palmer adorned parlor walls. Mural decorations painted by William Thresher contributed to the elegance of the rooms. The ceiling of the ladies' writing room, for instance, featured the motif of a Maine pine cone intertwined with an oak leaf. Guests admired the creations of nature and artists from "grand and sumptuous" chairs, sofas, and divans that invited repose and suggested "the sweet and entrancing music of the 'unspeakable Turk.'"

An Oriental portiere hanging from a Moorish archway screened the parlor from the lobby. In contrast to the patriotic mantel piece over the fireplace in the next room, the one in the parlor paid tribute to pleasure. "Tastily

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Grier, Culture and Comfort, 56-8, 186-98; "Poland Once Again," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 2.

The Turk may have been unspeakable, but Victorians admired his fabrics and furnishings. According to Grier, the rage for Turkish and Oriental items in Victorian decor reflected the "domestication of exotica."
finished in tile," the oak mantel featured a richly carved scene entitled "The Feast of Bacchus." Fittingly, guests passed this symbolic tribute to gluttony on their way to the dining room.19

Measuring forty by eighty feet, the dining hall accommodated up to three hundred people in 1876. The Ricker family presided over the room from the first table to the right of the entrance. An adjoining twenty-by-twenty-six-foot, private dining room seated up to forty honored guests. It connected to a third dining room reserved for the children and servants of guests.20

Diners assembled for meals three times daily. The hotel served breakfast from 7 to 9 in the morning, dinner between 1 and 2:30 in the afternoon, and supper from 6 to 8 in the evening. The leisurely pace of resort life, however, often made for tardy breakfasts. Liberation from the tyranny of the clock, coupled with New England custom, accounted likewise for the lateness of the midday meal.21

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19 Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated.
20 "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered: Recollections of Catharine Lewis Lennihan (Poland Spring, ME: Poland Spring Preservation Society, 1988), 42; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 13; Poland Spring: Announcement (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1892), unpaginated.
21 "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7; Menu, Poland Spring House, South Poland, ME, 1 June 1896, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, ME, (hereafter MHPC).
Although the conventions of punctuality were eased, the rules of gentility still governed the dining experience at the Poland Spring House. From the decor of the room to the paintings on the menu covers to the white dresses of the table girls to the presentation of the fare, everything about meal times reflected refinement. As one reporter put it, "dinner here is no vulgar wish." As evidence, the journalist noted that "stately dames and dowagers" wore gowns, albeit modest ones, even to breakfast.\(^2\)

Fashion preoccupied the thoughts of many guests, especially the women. While dining one evening in 1894, one patron observed "the many elegant costumes and the costly jewels worn." During a conversation on the veranda later that evening, the same person remarked that "the ladies know that they must bring their finest plumage to the backwoods of Maine." The statement recalled for another "old sojourner" the story of a prominent Philadelphia socialite who during a visit to Poland Spring in 1886, virtually hid in her room because she had not brought her silks and satins. Believing

\(^{22}\)"Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 12; "Drank Poland Water," Boston Sunday Globe, 14 June 1890; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7.

that Maine was one vast forest and the resort little more than a farmhouse in a clearing, the woman had mistakenly assumed that she would leave behind the worldly cares of fashion during her vacation.\textsuperscript{23}

The "public theatricality" of dinner parties called for even greater attention to costuming. A reception in July of 1887 for Civil War soldier and Massachusetts politician General Benjamin F. Butler brought out ladies dressed in their most elegant toilets and displaying the finest and rarest floral arrangements. Following a concert and dancing, the Rickers hosted a sumptuous banquet for the general and several hundred of his well-wishers.\textsuperscript{24}

For a figure such as Butler, a man accustomed to the public theater and secure in his status, the rules of gentility were less strict than for the average image-conscious guest. Although Butler's habits of tucking his napkin under his chin and chewing or smoking the wrong end of cigars attracted notice, his stature mitigated the unconventional behavior. As the Lewiston paper put it, the general had earned the "right" to do what he did.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23}"Told on the Verandas," \textit{Hill-Top}, 2 September 1894, 5.


\textsuperscript{25}"At Poland," \textit{Lewiston Evening Journal}, 17 June 1890, 1.
Butler repaid the kindness to one of his hosts by serving on the committee of arrangements that feted Edward Ricker and his new bride, Amelia Glancy, in June of 1890. Befitting the general's involvement, the committee conducted the housewarming reception with the precision of a military operation. At seven o'clock, the newlyweds began receiving the scores of guests outfitted "in full dress" who had come to pay their respects. An hour later, the large party bedecked in evening suits and evening dresses marched to the dining room of the Poland Spring House and took their places at one of the nearly three hundred and fifty table settings. As the orchestra played its musical tributes, diners feasted on menu selections that included main courses of salmon, lobster, fowl, roast beef, turkey, lamb, veal, crabs, and chicken. At precisely 9 PM, chairman Charles J. Noyes called the gathering to order and opened a round of five toasts, including one by General Butler. At ten o'clock, the party retired to the music hall for the presentation of gifts intended to establish the new couple with the necessary accoutrements of gentility. An order of eight dances capped off the evening. As the waltzes played on to the midnight hour, one observer noted that angels seemed to float across the floor dressed "in the most exquisite costumes" that did the "eyes good to see."26


In its account of the banquet, the Lewiston paper estimated the attendance at between seven and eight hundred
No matter how prestigious the guest of honor or how festive the occasion, water, not liquor, washed down the toasts at the Poland Spring House. The hilltop went dry sometime after the mid 1820s. A receipt recording the purchase of fifteen gallons of rum, four gallons of gin, and one gallon of madeira wine from a Portland merchant attests that Wentworth Ricker kept the tap room of the Mansion House well stocked at least until 1825. Thereafter, Hiram Ricker's discovery of the healing power of spring water, Alvan Bolster's leadership of the Sons of Temperance, and Albert Young's support of "the cold water principle" at his Auburn hotel reinforced the policy. When asked whether whiskey would be served at the new Poland Spring House, Young assured a "guileless" reporter in 1876 that this hotel, too, would be water powered. It was a decision Butler and many other genteel patrons of the resort heartily supported.²⁷

What tables lacked in variety of drink, they made up for in the cornucopia of food. A menu from 1887 offered diners people. It also thoroughly inventoried Mr. and Mrs. Ricker's booty: two watches (valued at $700), one clock and candelabra ($600), one pair of diamond solitaires ($1100), two piano lamps ($275), one album ($50), one pair of etchings ($100), one watch chain ($100), one punch bowl ($100), one water set, one set of candlesticks, one dictionary, stand, and holder, more etchings, one table lamp, one fan, six fruit knives, several vases, twelve tea spoons, one salad set, one bracelet, and some books.

the choice of four soups; two fish selections; ten meat
dinners, five of which were boiled and five roasted; five
entrees; four kinds of cold cuts; a dozen vegetable dishes;
nine relishes; five pastries; and sixteen desserts. In the
event guests had already drunk their fill of water, they could
wash down their meals with tea or coffee.28

The Hill-Top frequently wrote about the abundance of food
for which American hotels in general and the Poland Spring
House in particular were so well known. With a mixture of awe
and boastfulness, the paper reported that during just one day
in August of 1894, the kitchen had gone through 440 pounds of
beef, 300 pounds of lamb, 205 pounds of fish, 200 pounds of
duck, 150 pounds of chicken, 100 pounds of fowl, 90 pounds of
ribs, 75 pounds of turkey, 40 pounds of ham, 35 pounds of
lobster, 120 dozen eggs, 16 gallons of cream, 80 gallons of
milk, 3 bushels of berries, 18 pounds of coffee, 200 pounds of
sugar, and 3 barrels of flour worth of bread and pastry to
feed the guests. Despite the staggering quantity of food
consumed daily, the Hill-Top assured patrons that the larder
was inexhaustible.29

28Menu, Poland Spring House, 14 September 1887, Author’s
Collection.

29Harvey A. Levenstein, Revolution at the Table: The
Transformation of the American Diet (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1988), 7-8; "Our Cuisine," Hill-Top, 16
September 1894, 6; "What You Eat," Hill-Top, 4 August 1895, 1.

The consumption of over fifteen hundred pounds of meat by
about six hundred guests, an average of two and a half pounds
per person, compared with the consumption of two hundred and
The paper attributed the Gilded-Age gluttony of America’s gentility to two gastronomic philosophies: "eat, drink, and be merry" and "the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach." Ravenous diners could guiltlessly gorge their appetites, for even if their consumption doubled, the paper informed them, "the welcome is the same." Not surprisingly, excesses at the table caused many patrons to "gain flesh" during the course of the summer. Undoubtedly, it also exacerbated cases of a widespread disorder of the day -- dyspepsia -- the very malady that had drawn many patrons to the spring in the first place. The Hill-Top sent a curious mixed message to diners, assuring them that if they survived the overeating, they would "live to grow old and gray."30

In addition to the variety and abundance of the cuisine, the Rickers took great pride in the quality of the fare served in the dining rooms. To ensure freshness, the family produced some of the foodstuffs on site. Area farmers also sold large quantities to the resort. Food wholesalers in Auburn, Lewiston, and Boston supplied the rest.31

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fifty pounds of beef by roughly three hundred workers, not all of whom necessarily took their meals at the hotel, on the same day. The food served to guests and employees differed in quality as well as quantity. The latter group feasted on rib and loin beef; the former ate corned beef.

30Ibid., 2; "Behind the Scenes," Hill-Top, 23 August 1896, 2; "Our Cuisine," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 6; Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 22.

31"Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876.
The family delegated responsibility for procuring provisions to Alvan Ricker. The duty entailed frequent trips to Boston, where A. B. gained a reputation for being "one of the shrewdest buyers" in the city. Merchants knew that showing him less than the best produce was a waste of time. For his part, Ricker kept a detailed accounting of purchases made for the culinary department. From 1896 to 1903, he meticulously recorded data on the quantities and costs of over one hundred foodstuffs served at the resort, ranging from anchovies to vermicelli. Indicating the financial limits that constrained even a luxury resort, his cost consciousness resulted in the procurement of cheaper fare for employees than for guests and experiments to determine which brand of flour produced the most bread. Ricker's calculations determined that 196 pounds of Washburn flour yielded 145 loaves weighing on average 32 to 33 ounces, while the same amount of the King Arthur brand yielded 145 loaves weighing only 31 ounces each.32

Although Alvan Ricker reigned over the larder and kitchen, the dining room was the domain of the headwaiter. For many years, Julius Gassauer, an Austrian native training for the ministry, masterfully handled the duty of serving a clientele accustomed to receiving first-class treatment. A demeanor epitomizing European culture and refinement that

32"Our Cuisine," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 6; Notebook, A. B. Ricker, South Poland, ME, 1896-1903, Maine State Library, Augusta, ME.
caused patrons to regard the headwaiter as a peer abetted his work. At meal times, Gassauer and his assistants seated each party at one of sixty tables that accommodated anywhere from six to fourteen people. For status-conscious patrons, seating was no simple matter of first come, first served. Regular visitors often expected to dine at a favorite table, while fashionable guests wanted places at the end of the hall so they could parade by everyone. The ability to satisfy every preference was the true test of the headwaiter's skillfulness. Gassauer orchestrated the flow of events in the dining room so smoothly that the Hill-Top observed in 1896: "Mr. Julius's friends are limited only by the capacity of the house."33

The headwaiter also supervised the table girls who served diners. Overseeing this crew was no small task, for the wait staff numbered sixty women in 1889, and grew to ninety by 1900. The headwaiter had the responsibility of making certain everyone knew the rules governing "time of service, general behavior, and manner of waiting on table." Waitresses, for example, were expected to adhere to a dress code. The uniform for breakfasts and teas was a dark dress with an "ample" skirt and a large white apron; for dinners, the uniform was a white dress, "neatly arranged," and an apron. Regulations also directed waitresses "at all times to have their hair neatly

33Rickers, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 40-2; Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 183-4; "Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 3; "Pleasure and Comfort," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 5; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 2 August 1896, 8.

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arranged." Failure to "conform strictly to the rules of the Dining Hall" provided grounds for "immediate discharge." 34

Although the waitresses agreed to abide by the terms of an agreement that dictated the maintenance of "good order" down to the minutest detail, they were far from docile, uninformed workers. Many of the women who sought summer employment at the resort were teachers or students. In the opinion of one guest, Jane Patterson, their educated backgrounds made some of the table girls "as scholarly as the ladies they serve." 35

Patterson attributed the constantly improving "class of servants" to the "excellent care" the Rickers provided their employees. In 1892 waitresses worked for $2.50 per week, less the cost of their uniforms and travel expenses. In addition, they received free room and board. To ensure the faithful service of the wait staff, the standard employee contract stipulated that dismissal or early departure risked the forfeiture of half the season's wages. The clause had force behind it, because the Rickers withheld final payment of wages

34 "At Poland Spring," Portland Daily Press, 1889, in Scrapbook, John Calvin Stevens Collection #209, M 573-5, Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME; Souvenir List of Employees (Poland Spring, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1900); Carrie F. Hubbard, Contract, Poland Spring House, South Poland, ME, 26 April 1892, MHPC.

until an employee’s service had concluded. No worker skipped out early without paying the price.36

Eating was not the only use of the dining room. Exemplifying the way Victorians combined domesticity and piety, the faithful regularly transformed the dining hall into a place of worship. Announcements in the Hill-Top cordially invited both guests and employees to the services conducted by Julius Gassauer each Sunday evening at 8:45. The sessions drew "excellent attendance" and all who had the opportunity to listen to the "carefully-prepared sermons" of the preaching headwaiter bore "testimony to the excellence of his discourses." Sometimes a visiting clergyman or distinguished guest also addressed the congregation. The singing of hymns led by the "delightful voices" of waitresses and the occasional performance of musical numbers by special guests rounded out the service.37

36 Ibid.

37 McDannell, Christian Home, xiii-xv; "Sunday Services," Hill-Top, 9 July 1899, 16; "Sunday Service," Hill-Top, 15 July 1900, 2; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 2 August 1896, 8; Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 284-5; "All Soul’s Chapel Monument to Many," Tower, 31 July 1943, 1-2; Poland Spring Centennial, 73.

Gassauer introduced the custom of worship to the resort, holding the first religious services for his coworkers in the grove behind the Poland Spring House. He designated the first collection taken up to a fund for the construction of a proper church on the hilltop. The makeshift service proved so popular that the Ricker brothers offered the use of the hotel dining room in the interim. It was a long interim. Although Poland Spring Centennial, which was published in 1895, contained an artist’s rendering of a chapel, ground was not broken for the building until 1909 and All Souls’ Chapel was
Off of the dining room, through doors no patron need ever pass, although the Hill-Top made clear they were welcome to, lay the netherworld where workers prepared meals and cleaned up after diners. The paper sometimes took curious readers to the "unknown country" at the so-called "back of the house." Besides the kitchen with its range, broiler, and brick oven, the facility consisted of separate meat, pastry, serving, and dish washing rooms. In 1895 fourteen cooks, two butchers, and twenty assistants staffed the culinary department. Their general was Alvan Ricker. His chief officers in the "perfectly-arranged" department were the chef, John W. Sparrow, who was in his fourth season of service, and the steward, Mr. Dockham.3

Further "behind the scenes" lay the laundry. Lacking the appeal of tasty food, dirty clothes never drew the attention of the Hill-Top. The laundry chute was the closest most guests ever got to the wash and ironing rooms. There, up to twenty-one cogs in the human "machinery of the hotel" washed, mangled, starched, and ironed the clothes and linens that made not dedicated until September 1, 1912. One of the three clergymen officiating at the ceremony was the Reverend Julius Gassauer who had gone on to become an ordained Episcopal clergyman in New York City.

3"Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1901), unpaginated; "Our Cuisine," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 6; "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; Poland Spring (1892), unpaginated; "Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 1; Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; "Behind the Scenes," Hill-Top, 23 August 1896, 2; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 12.
the resort and its patrons so fashionable. For a brief time in 1888, the Sabbathday Lake Shakers took in some of the more delicate and labor-intensive laundry assignments from Poland Spring. Over the objection of community leaders who did not want to see the Sisters made "Slaves or Washer Women," a group of Shaker women cleaned the collars and cuffs of the resort's clientele for seventy-five cents per job.39

At the very back of the Poland Spring House lay space set aside for the more than two hundred workers who kept "the machine in motion." Their quarters consisted of a kitchen, dining room, sitting room, and for those members of the staff who boarded at the hotel, bedrooms. In return for the hard work demanded of seasonal employees, the Rickers promised to provide them with "comfortable accommodations." The proprietors, in return, expected workers to keep the rooms in good order, do their own washing and ironing, obey a 10 PM curfew, and comport themselves "quietly and civilly." The obligations of gentility governed the back of the house, too.40

Unlike the very public first floor of the Poland Spring House, the upper floors encompassed many private realms. From the original one hundred and twenty bedrooms in 1876, the

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39"Behind the Scenes," Hill-Top, 23 August 1896, 1-2; "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; "Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 1; "Pleasure and Comfort," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 5; Souvenir List (1900); "Church Record," vol. 3, New Gloucester, ME, 10 August 1888, 239, USS.

40"Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 1; Hubbard, Contract; Souvenir List (1900).
hotel expanded to include over four hundred sleeping quarters two decades later. Descriptions of the apartments characterized the scale as spacious, the decor as tasteful, the furnishings as comfortable, and the ambience as inviting. Suites offered the most amenities: large closets, private baths, broad windows, cozy verandas, and open fireplaces. The geographic orientation of the building exposed most rooms to a maximum amount of summer sun and breezes. Thus, the apartments abounded in radiant light and refreshing air. The proprietors promised that there were no poor rooms in the hotel and "none without something of a view."41

For the geriatric element of the resort's clientele, the bedroom -- a place of relative peace and quiet -- provided the ideal setting for convalescence. Although the Rickers promoted the promise of good health to attract patrons, they simultaneously sought to dispel the image of the hotel as a hospital. An 1887 pamphlet demonstrates the mixed message that resulted from the contrasting images of the Poland Spring House as a genteel home and social mecca. It opened by declaring that the resort was "one of the most charming spots . . . for invalids in search of health." A few pages later, however, the tract changed tack, advising readers not to get the idea that Poland Spring "is a resort for invalids only."

41 Elizabeth Collins Cromley, "A History of American Beds and Bedrooms, 1890-1930," in American Home Life, 120; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 13; Poland Spring Centennial, 69, 74.
To accentuate the latter point, a lengthy list of activities available at Poland Spring followed.42

An 1892 newspaper article conveyed the dual message the opposite way. It first made the forceful statements: "Poland Spring is not a hospital. It is no invalids' home." In case anyone missed the point, the writer added: "the idea that Poland Spring is the abode chiefly of the lame and the invalid is wrong." Yet, the article closed with a detailed account of how a "weak and tottering" New York businessman had come to Poland Spring in 1888 to regain his health.43

The Rickers did employ a local physician, Dr. Milton C. Wedgwood, to look after the medical needs of guests. Wedgwood's informal and sporadic visits to Poland Spring beginning in the 1870s had gradually evolved into a more formal and permanent relationship that by the 1890s brought the doctor from his practice in Lewiston to the resort three to four times a week during July and August. Given his long experience, no one knew the aches and pains of guests better than he. Commenting on the general health of the clientele in 1894, Dr. Wedgwood observed that "the majority of the people that come to Poland Spring are middle aged and there is hardly a floor in the house that doesn't have two or more sick people

42Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated.
43"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8.
in it, and they have come there because it is retired and because they want quiet."4 4

In their never-ending quest to create a hotel that could please everyone all the time, while still remaining solvent, the Rickers began making costly improvements to the Poland Spring House only a few years after it opened. In 1881, for example, the family spent $20,000 on exterior and interior alterations. A $15,000 mortgage, the third taken out on the homestead in five years and the second received from Philander S. Briggs of Boston, partially financed the renovations. In a move to gain full control of the management of the resort, the Ricker brothers used some of the money to buy out Albert Young's interest in the hotel valued at nearly $24,000. The agreement between the partners also specifically obligated the Rickers to cover an outstanding balance of $280 still owed Bradford and Conant for the hotel's original furnishings.4 5

Noble Castle

With a major expansion and renovation in 1889 financed by a third mortgage on the hotel lot, the Rickers sought to upgrade the character of the Poland Spring House from a

""Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 122-3, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME; Hill-Top, 30 June 1895, 8.

"Poland Spring Centennial, 66; Deeds, Book 98, 13-5; Book 104, 120-1, ACRD; C[harles] R. Milliken, Correspondence, Portland, ME, to Albert Young, 26 April 1881, AHS.

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genteel home to a noble castle. The plan submitted by architects John Calvin Stevens and Albert Winslow Cobb extended the northwest wing of the building 116 feet and increased both the size of the dining room and number of apartments. It also improved "the architectural style of the great house" by incorporating Queen Anne and Colonial Revival motifs into the design. The transformation also elevated the image of the hotel's clientele from families of self-made men of progress to heirs of a self-perpetuating native aristocracy. Competition within the resort industry made the move a virtual necessity, since palatial hotels had become the standard by which wealthy travelers judged the merit of vacation spots."

Edward Ricker took an active interest in the redesign of the hotel. Recognizing the opportunity presented by the tree-shrouded approach to the hilltop, he devoted a great deal of consideration to the first impression made by the facade of the building as it suddenly burst into the sight of stage


Cromley has proposed a six-stage evolution of hotel building design: farmhouse/boarding house, inn/tavern, palace, moderate-sized hotel block, bungalow colony, and motel. The Mansion House exemplified category two, the Poland Spring House, category three.
coach passengers. Study of other hotels had convinced Ricker of the desirability of artistry in architecture. A replica of the huge, barnlike structures that passed for hotels in Bar Harbor would not do at his resort. Ricker's determination to add more character to the Poland Spring House led to close consultation with the architects. Dissatisfied with their plan to renovate the main tower, E. P. telegraphed his revisions to Stevens and Cobb at their Portland office. Writing from Boston, Stevens assured his "anxious" client that "satisfactory arrangements" for the contemplated changes could be fixed up. They were. The architects added bays on the upper stories and a cap to the roof of the remodeled tower. Four new towers, symbolizing the elevation of the hotel's image from house to castle, also crowned the addition."

As concerned as Ricker was with the exterior details, the main focus of the project was the expansion of the dining room. The addition increased the length of the room to 183 feet and its capacity to four hundred diners. The most eye-catching feature of the new facility was the view afforded by an eight-by-fourteen-foot, plate-glass window located at the far end of the hall. Two sixteen-foot-wide "old-fashioned, colonial mantels" surrounding seven-foot-wide fireplaces with built-in sideboards on either end; a platform for the orchestra; and many stained-glass windows lined the right side of

"At Poland Spring," Portland Daily Press, 1889; John Calvin Stevens, Correspondence, Boston, MA, 19 March 1889, MHPC; "Dissolving Views," Hill-Top, 19 July 1903, 2.
the room. A fireplace, large carved sideboard, several bays, and more plate-glass windows added character and spectacular views on the left side. Corinthian columns carrying exposed beams supported the chandeliered ceiling."

The remodeling also included new furnishings and decor for the room. Diners sat in leather-seated, oak chairs specially designed by Edward Ricker and at tables "richly clothed" in the finest linen. They ate off of Haviland china decorated with "exquisitely painted vines in woodsy suggestion," using luxurious silverware. The vine motif also appeared along the top of the nearly sixteen-foot-high walls in the form of an embossed pattern stenciled by one the foremost mural figure-painters in the country, Albert Haberstroh of Boston. In the glow of the gas light, the pure cream white walls created an ambience of rest and comfort and the polished oak floor shone like satin."

Besides expanding the hall to "grand and palatial dimensions," the project refashioned the public parlor into a ladies' reading and writing room. A large fireplace, symbolizing comfort, welcome, and hospitality, was the focal point of the room. Couples experienced its warmth, or generated

""At Poland Spring," Portland Daily Press, 1889; Poland Spring Hotels (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1889), 5.

their own, from a nearby "elegantly upholstered plush chimney seat so deep that lovers might be lost in it." Those guests inclined to reading and writing rather than romance did so under specially designed chandeliers.50

Above the dining room, the addition made way for fifty-five new apartments. A tour of the third floor conducted by "Landlord" Ricker led through suites comprised of bed, sitting, and bathrooms that the likes of the Richard Stearns family of Boston rented for the princely sum of $70 per week. The new rooms featured "exquisite" Wilton and Brussels carpets, "sumptuous" brass and oak furniture, hot and cold running water, steam heat, open fireplaces, "superb" views, and "closets enough to make every lady smile." The Rickers proudly, even boastfully, advertised that the remodeled Poland Spring House was "first-class in all its appointments, and second to no Summer Hotel in the United States, a perfect home for its patrons."51

Lest patrons fail to appreciate the transformation fully, publicists added their finishing touches to the creations of the architects, carpenters, decorators, and other craftsmen who had worked on the renovation. In an 1890 essay, the well-known travel writer William H. H. Murray lauded the "noble


51Ibid.; Poland Spring Hotels (1889), 9.
hotel nobly located" on a "noble" hill, noting that "it becomes, as a crown becometh a king's head." The interior of the hotel impressed him as well. Murray appreciated the "noble" appearance of the lobby, spaciousness of the corridors, and abundance of atmosphere.\textsuperscript{52}

Murray reserved his most glowing comments, however, for the dining hall. The room's size, "noble" height, gleaming floors, and magnificent views reminded him of the halls where old Norse kings "met for feast and wassail." Moreover, the sweet music, fragrant flowers, and beautiful furniture created a cultivated setting that Murray considered as vital to an enjoyable dining experience as "victuals deftly prepared." He complimented the hosts for honoring their guests "as people of refinement and civilized tastes" rather than as brutish swine. The Rickers, Murray concluded, exalted "the noble art of entertainment."\textsuperscript{53}

Other publicists joined the chorus in praise of the nobility and majesty of the hotel. An account published in 1891 depicted the Poland Spring House as a palace of beauty, wealth, and fashion. Three years later, Lida Churchill characterized it as "a veritable castle of liberty and expansion." In the same year, George Haynes dubbed Poland Spring the "Queen of Resorts" and portrayed its main hotel as "a veritable castle on the hill." Also in 1894, the editor of

\textsuperscript{52}Murray, "Poland Spring Hotel," 6-7.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., 8-10.
Foster's Democrat in Dover, New Hampshire, paid tribute in his newspaper to "the mammoth palace on the hill." In 1897 the Boston Daily Globe told its readers about "the castle-like Poland Spring House" that crowned the "noble hill." For its part, the Hill-Top compared the edifice to a palace "with all imperial magnificence."

Although the often antimodern images of the hotel as house or castle persisted, contrasting modern images flourished, too. Thus in describing the last major renovation to the Poland Spring House during the nineteenth century, the Hill-Top attributed the charm of the "royal" apartments to "furnishings of the most modern and expensive production." The 1899 remodeling job added more graceful proportions to the central tower, more tasteful decoration to the office lobby, more luxurious elegance to the first-floor parlors, and more sumptuous suites to the upper floors.

One guest who understood the transformation taking place within the Poland Spring House long before 1899 was Jane Patterson. Her fictional account of her experiences at the resort, The Romance of the New Bethesda, chronicled changes at

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"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7; Poland Spring Centennial, 71; Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, Maine (Boston: W. A. Ferguson, 1891), 735; "Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 1; "Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 2; "Maine's Famous Resort," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 7; "Quarter Century," Boston Daily Globe, 4 March 1897; "Why Poland Thrives," Hill-Top, 30 July 1899, 2.

"Poland Once Again," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 2.
the resort between 1873 and 1885. Before the construction of
the new hotel, an informal, homelike atmosphere had reigned on
the hilltop. Women had come for rest, not for dress parades.
The opening of the New Bethesda House altered everything.
Commenting on the state of affairs by 1878, Patterson
lamented:

With the new house, a new order had unconsciously
crept in. Ladies appeared at the supper-table in full
dress, and radiant with laces and diamonds. Calico
and gingham still prevailed in the morning, but every
lady must look her prettiest at evening. Even the
gentlemen laid aside their business suits and con­
formed to the new order. The at-home atmosphere so
charming at the Old Stage Tavern seemed a little
chilled by the invasion of fashion.  

With even greater disappointment, Patterson contended
that other elements of the invasion of modernity had also
caused the resort to outgrow "the family ideal." The domestic
atmosphere that had once bound guests together in "a union of
sentiment" had disappeared. In its place arose a less
congenial setting that emphasized the status and pleasure of
individual families. Diamonds now sparkled "like rain-drops
on an April day." "Portly and well-kept men, and care-free
women . . . clothed like queens" clogged the halls and

"Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 13, 85; "Tid­
Bits," Hill-Top, 13 September 1896, 14.

The inspiration for Patterson's novel was no secret. An
1896 issue of the Hill-Top announced that "The New Bethesda by
Mrs. Patterson, will be recognized as located at Poland
Springs." The author's fictional names for the Mansion House
and Poland Spring House, the Old Stage Tavern and New Bethesda
House respectively, highlighted the vivid contrasts between
antimodernity and modernity.
piazzas. Unknown figures flitted about in perpetual motion. Strange faces appeared at every turn. In Patterson's view, the resort had ceased to be a home away from home where genteel, middle-class families shared a sense of community. Instead, it had become a social mecca where acquisitive, leisure-class consumers paid a high price to buy into a sense of community.57

Social Mecca

Others picked up on the transformation, too. The writer of an 1892 article portrayed the resort as "a place of pleasure, life, society, restfulness and joyous diversion." The list suggested some of the complex functions that gave life to the multiple images of the Poland Spring House. Although the idealized visions of the Victorian home and resort shared the common goal of escape from worldly problems, completely re-creating a domestic refuge in a hotel was impossible given the inherent public nature of the setting. Filled with hundreds of guests from many different places, what the Poland Spring House lacked in domestic tranquility it made up for in a complementary area -- Victorian sociability.58

57Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 265-6, 283.
58"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8.
As several historians have argued, the Victorians were fundamentally public people. Anne C. Rose has attributed their sociability to the diminished force of religious experience and the increased influence of secular claims on people's lives. The very public realm of leisure provided one outlet in the romantic search for new experiences. The experience of travel, exposure to nature, and expectation of entertainment brought pleasure, stimulation, and vitality to Victorian vacationers, who, she contends, relished the sociability of hotels.59

Jane Patterson's contemporary account of cultural change during the Gilded Age supports this historical assessment. Herself the wife of a Universalist minister, Patterson used The Romance of the New Bethesda to express dismay at the waning of religious sentiment. In the novel, Maud Raynor, a woman who has entered the ministry, voices alarm that young people are "so volatile, so given to the pursuit of pleasure, with small evidence of that serious undertone which swayed and fashioned her own youth." Furthermore, it amazes her "that the Sunday-school takes on the air of a holiday party, with scarcely a sign of the reverence suggested by the place and the work it is set do." Given the rising secular spirit, the New Bethesda House becomes the haunt of pleasure seekers.60

59Anne C. Rose, Victorian America and the Civil War (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3, 17, 111-41, 175.
60Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 257, 282.
Christine McDannell, on the other hand, has rooted Victorian sociability in the affirmation of religious conviction rather than in its erosion. She maintains that "Victorians were not a private people concerned with constructing a hiding place in the world, they were a public people who sought to define themselves through display of their sense of 'election.'" The conspicuous display of both genteel behavior and material bounty in the home, as well as in public forums such as hotels, validated their sense of salvation and social identity. The sociable modern Christian and consumer, thus, joined the sociable modern pleasure seeker and vacationer at the Poland Spring House in what the Hill-Top termed the "social whirl."61

Confirming Jane Patterson's observations that the hotel was already well on its way to becoming a social mecca by 1884, the Rickers in that year initiated renovations that added to the entertainment offerings available at the resort. The first part of the project, improvements to the exterior, made the structure more stylish by adding two towers, several ornamental chimneys, and a less monotonous facade. Phase two, the construction of a 40-by-125-foot extension to the southwest wing of the hotel, increased the number of bedrooms in

the facility by sixty-four and included a "dainty" new music hall.62

The music hall measured thirty-six feet wide by seventy-two feet long. Entering the north end of the room from the lobby corridor, guests faced the stage at the opposite end. Anterooms adjoined both sides of the stage. Two fireplaces and an equal number of large windows filled much of the space along the west wall. The ceiling consisted of eighteen, twelve-foot-square, plaster panels, intersected by exposed beams.63

Ornate decorations accentuated the music room. Papier-mâché artist Charles Emmel of Boston laid Nile green and Pompeian red, circular designs in each ceiling panel, as well as laurel, knot, and ribbon motifs in white and gold on each ceiling beam. He also faced the supporting brackets with white and gold acanthus leaves on a field of red. His masterpiece, though, was a frieze of a Morning Glory. William Thresher contributed to the artistic design by painting and gilding the hall. It featured walls painted in warm buff with bands of soft salmon, dado painted in soft olive with bands of a deeper shade, and woodwork painted old ivory. Stained glass placed above the windows brought additional color and "a new brilliancy" to the "charming spot." By 1897 the classical,


Renaissance, and colonial revival touches added to the room over the years gave it "the impression of eternal youthfulness."64

Music at the Poland Spring House predated the music hall. A fiddler from Poland, Albion Waterhouse, accompanied by his cousin, Rufus, and a Mr. Dennis, who played piano and cornet, comprised the first group to perform at the hotel. During the inaugural season, the trio greeted new arrivals in the lobby with a repertoire of dance tunes. At night the group played for guests who merrily reeled, jigged, and waltzed to the music.65

A succession of local musicians played the hotel over the next decade. A four-piece orchestra led by another "old-time" fiddle player, Mr. Fales of Lewiston, replaced the Waterhouse trio in 1877. After several seasons, the orchestra gave way to brass bands directed first by Gad Robinson and then by a Mr. Prouty. With the arrival of the more mobile bands, the venue for serenading in-bound travelers shifted from the hotel lobby to the Spring House. After the last stage had arrived for the day, the group moved to the lobby, where it customarily entertained the crowds gathering for the evening meal. Jane Patterson recalled that the musical prelude especially appealed to the young people who danced informally while

64 Ibid.
65 Carlos E. Pinfield, "Music Throughout the Years at Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 25 August 1928, 5-6.
waiting to head into the dining room. When the weather permitted, the band also performed outdoors in the hotel courtyard."

The addition of the music hall quickly changed the tradition of local musicians, informal dances, and outdoor concerts. In 1886 the Rickers hired eight professional musicians from the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) at a cost of several thousand dollars. Led by pianist J. Howard Richardson, the orchestra performed concerts, complete with printed programs, at 11:30 AM and 8:00 PM on weekdays and at 3:30 PM on Sundays. At these sessions, a repertoire of music "culled from the finest literature" supplanted once popular dance tunes such as "Sweet Marie" and "Ta-ra-ra." Patterson termed it "music to satisfy the artist."

A spectator described the scene at a forenoon concert in 1892 as elderly ladies sitting "with folded hands and some with needle work." Genteel audiences now politely listened rather than spiritedly danced to music. They now sought cultural improvement rather than physical stimulation."  

The new formality of the music reflected the ongoing differentiation of the arts into high and low brow cultures during the nineteenth century. Where once guests had happily

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"Ibid., 6; Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 81.

"Pinfield, "Music Throughout the Years," Hill-Top, 25 August 1928, 6; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7-8; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 12 August 1894, 3; "Pleasure and Comfort," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 5; Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 265."
danced to "popular" music, the Hill-Top now derided it as too commonplace. Audiences in the music hall wanted something more than mere frivolity from music; they wanted cultural refinement and moral uplift. More importantly, they expected their appreciation of orchestral music, with its emphasis on the European classics, to help fulfill their genteel aspirations."

After eight years as director, Richardson turned over leadership of the Poland Spring orchestra to Daniel Kuntz. Kuntz, a violinist with the BSO, was no stranger to the resort. He had played under Richardson for several seasons, during which time he had become one of the most popular performers. Fellow violinist Johann Michael, cellist Erich Loeffler, bassist Emil Golde, flutist Gustave Krobe, cornetist H. Burkhardt, and pianist Max Zach rounded out the Kuntz Orchestral Club. The management of the resort congratulated itself for having assembled such a talented collection of musicians. It was a group, the Hill-Top stated, with which "music lovers from any of the large cities will feel well acquainted." Indeed, one Bostonian staying at the hotel

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believed the orchestra was excelled by none and equalled by few."9

The orchestra performed what the Hill-Top considered the best works of all the great composers, including Beethoven, Wagner, Mozart, Rossini, Bach, and Strauss. Concerts typically offered between five and eight arrangements, one or two of which might be performed solo. Visiting artists, usually singers, also contributed their talents to the presentations. In July of 1897, for instance, the "large dramatic voice" of contralto Katharine Ricker, a relative of the proprietors, filled the music hall with songs of "thorough musical and artistic feeling." A performer with the Central Congregational Church in Boston, Ricker "was heartily encored in all selections." Guests even volunteered a song from time to time. In 1895 D. J. Griffith surprised concert goers with an exquisite rendition of "Die Uhr." A "most hearty and deserved" reception elicited from Griffith a double encore of "Wanderers Nacht Lied" by Schubert and "Es war ein alter König" by Heitsch.70

On Saturday evenings the orchestra performed at the various social events held in the music hall. Hops brought out young ladies attired in "tasty" costumes and young

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9Pinfield, "Music Throughout the Years," Hill-Top, 25 August 1928, 7; "Our Orchestra," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 4; "Our Orchestra," Hill-Top, 29 July 1894, 2.

70"The Music Hall," Hill-Top, 11 July 1897, 1-2; "Concert," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 7; "Last Sunday’s Concert," Hill-Top, 21 July 1895, 4.
gentlemen in "regulation black," watched over by matrons in "more sober shades." Glittering diamonds, beautiful pearls, and other choice jewels accentuated colorful gowns made out of satin, crepon, muslin, chiffon, silk, organdie, velvet, taffeta, and lace, and decorated with multicolored brocade and ribbons. The "entrancing strains" struck up by the orchestra summoned the young people onto the "smooth waxen floor" for "dreamy" waltzes. The dance floor offered escape from "the trials and the sober realities of life" to the youthful party goers, whose credo reportedly was: "let us be gay."  

Many children accompanied their parents on vacation. One report in 1892 claimed that there was proportionately "more of the youth of swelldom at Poland Spring than at any other resort in America." The presence of so many young people helped shape the social agenda of the hotel, as evidenced by the hops and other youth-oriented leisure activities. It also expanded the bounds of propriety and added an air of romance, making the vacation community what Janet Elinor Schulte has referred to as "a children’s paradise."  

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In her study of Old Orchard Beach, Maine, Schulte has contended that youth culture dominated the social agenda of
The Trowbridge family of New York City exemplified the dimensions of youth culture at Poland Spring. Dr. and Mrs. George Trowbridge arrived at the resort with their daughters, Theodora and Julia, and the family's maid during the last week of July in 1894. Two weeks later, "the exceedingly popular" Theo celebrated her eleventh birthday at a luncheon in the dining room of the Poland Spring House. "After a jolly hour at the table," the guest of honor and nine friends retired to the music hall for an afternoon of games and dances. Later that week, Mrs. Trowbridge and Mrs. Byron Moulton hosted "the event of the season," a Mother Goose party, for over three dozen of the young people. The Trowbridge girls attended the costume party as the characters Lucy Locket and Kitty Fisher. Perhaps indicative of her fondness for children, Mrs. Trowbridge came dressed as the Old Woman in the Shoe. Following the grand march and program of ten dances held in the music hall, Dr. Trowbridge entertained the party-goers in the dining room with "a bountiful collation."

The Trowbridges returned to Poland Spring the next year and spent the month of August again immersed in the activities of the junior set. Mrs. Trowbridge in particular devoted herself with "untiring energy" to the social development of the vacation community. Young people did not have as great an impact on the calendar and course of events at Poland Spring.

the young people. On August 2nd, she chaperoned a cotillion for "a very brilliant and attractive throng of Poland's elite" that included her own daughters. Trowbridge encouraged courtship among the twelve girls and six boys, while monitoring it attentively, by distributing as party favors bows and arrows bound with ribbons as a symbol of Cupid's influence. A week and a half later, Theo celebrated her twelfth birthday with twelve friends. Then on the 22nd of the month, Mrs. Trowbridge and her husband presided over yet another cotillion for the young people."

The family's stay culminated on August 24th with "the most important social event of the season," a bal masque. The costumes Dr. and Mrs. Trowbridge wore paid tribute to European aristocracy and the colonial revival respectively. The host of the event came as a Continental gentleman, while the hostess made her appearance as Martha Washington. Following the lead of the doctor, the ten young men in attendance likewise dressed in the Continental style. The costumes of the young ladies displayed much more diversity and creativity. Theodora Trowbridge donned the attire of "a modest little red-cross nurse," while Julia dressed "as a bewitching little Italienne." Miss Vose wore the most revealing costume,
however, that of "a typical summer girl with her engagement finger full of rings." 75

The romantic possibilities of the resort appealed to young people far more than the cultural opportunities. Reflecting the sentiment that "love is the most interesting thing in the world," Patterson's novel teemed with youths engaged in the Victorian rituals of courtship. Even the briefest visit revealed the omnipresence of romance among the young crowd. Citing the romantic setting and gossip making the rounds, a newspaper correspondent speculated in 1892 that "there may be love-making here." Similar rumors found their way into the Hill-Top, which reported two years later: "It is whispered that Cupid has been busy again on the hill." The announcement of another "Poland engagement" between two people who had met at the resort confirmed the idle talk heard on the veranda and enhanced the site's reputation as a rival to Bar Harbor in the area of romance. 76

In addition to courting through the pretense of masquerade, young Victorians also acted out their romantic desires through tableauxs. Romance was the recurring theme of a three-part entertainment put on in the music hall by the young people in July of 1895. The first part presented the

75 "Bal Masque," Hill-Top, 1 September 1895, 2.

76 Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 16; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7; Hill-Top, 2 September 1894, 10; "Concerning Cupid," Hill-Top, 5 August 1900, 13.
story "The Princess Aline" by Richard Harding Davis in seven acts. In the tale, a young man finds himself torn between love for two women. The second part of the program included three acts, the last of which was "A Bachelor's Dream." In the skit, a gypsy, nun, farmer's daughter, cyclist, summer girl, horsey girl, and bride pass through the dream. Significantly, the final representation of womanhood -- the bride -- brings "the sleeper to his waking senses." As if to toast the message of matrimonial bliss, the tableaux concluded with a tribute entitled simply "Poland Water."

Through the annual employees' masquerade, members of the Poland Spring House staff acted out their fantasies in the music hall as well. The 1894 event attracted forty couples. The costumes of May Dunne, who wore a dress emblazoned with Hill-Top banners; Annie Hayes, who covered her dress with Poland Water tags; and Eugene Buckley, who dressed to look like a Poland Water bottle, attracted the attention of the five hundred spectators who gathered to watch the grand march. Besides the costumes sure to win the favor of employers, the guest list typically included "a sprinkling of clowns, Chinamen, Indians, Monkeys, Harlequins, and Sailors."

Following the march to the music hall, participants enjoyed a program of ten dances performed by the "ever superior" Kuntz Orchestral Club. Amidst the order of dances, the revelers doffed their masks and revealed their identities at the sound

""Concert and Tableaux," Hill-Top, 4 August 1895, 5.
of the cornet. The "jolly" party concluded in the dining room with a "bounteous," late-night supper organized by Nettie and Amelia Ricker."

In contrast to the bal masques thrown for young grown-ups in training and hardworking leisure-class aspirants in waiting, the bal poudres thrown by adult guests, while socially pretentious, did not require participants to wear costumes or more to the point, adopt whole new identities. Unlike young people and hotel employees, when adult patrons left the music hall at the end of the night, they remained prominent, prosperous, upstanding members of the leisure class. Balls were held at least once a season, more often if some special occasion warranted. More formal than the energetic hops, youthful cotillions, or mirthful masquerades, balls commenced with grand processions from the lobby to the music hall that permitted the elegantly attired couples to display their costumes to other admiring guests. The dance card further transformed the rudiments of the informal hop into an affair of "stately dignity." The intricacy and precision of marches, quadrilles, waltzes, Schottisches, Lanciers, gallops, and fancies made it "hard to recognize the usual jolly dancers of Saturday night.""


As well as providing opportunities for sociability and fashionability, balls stirred noble aristocratic longings. One such affair in 1898, for instance, "renewed long dormant memories of those halcyon days when the time-honored Mansion House" first opened. The sight of a court dame curtseying "gracefully to ye graceful court gallant" recalled a time "when chivalry reigned supreme and Cupid ruled the world." Moreover, the evening provided the opportunity for escape, as "the bustle and hustle of to-day gave place to the adolescence of days gone by." 80

Another ball held two years later evoked similar anti-modern sentiments. The Hill-Top complimented the twelve couples who participated in the grand march for displaying "all the courtly grace the dames of George Washington's time could have desired." In the haze of nostalgia, the readily apparent haughtiness of the "deep curtsies" of the "demure ladies" and the low bows of the "courtly gentlemen" became endearing. Adding to the formality of the evening, the ladies wore "dainty" gowns and flashed dazzling jewelry. Their escorts wore over their suits "imperial" ribbon sashes "on which shone jeweled orders befitting their rank." One of the


young "cavaliers," Mr. Brooks, bedecked in "his royal purple sash and single diamond star," reminded observers of "the youthful portraits of George Washington."  

The high-brow tone of balls carried over into many of the lectures presented in the music hall. While the presentations had no intentional unifying theme, essentially they amounted to training in gentility. Mrs. John Bailey's programs, "Harmony of the Body," "Voice in Speaking," and "Dress," which could be supplemented with private lessons at $5 per individual session or $15 for ten group sessions, instructed women how to be more well mannered, well spoken, and well dressed. Talks on the Battle of Gettysburg, theory of the flat earth, and Mark Twain's Innocents Abroad enabled guests to sound more well educated. Illustrated lectures on the gold rush in the Klondike and war in Cuba made them more well informed. Poetry recitations and dramatic performances made audience members more well cultured. Presentations on the Grand Canyon, Alaska, India, and Matterhorn made the vacationers seem even more well traveled. A sermon on the Christian school founded in Antioch, Syria, by Ezekiel Taminosian, which concluded with the passing of the collection plate, made the stewards of wealth feel more well intentioned.

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The quest for gentility made the music hall a place of worship as well as works. On Sunday mornings, guests assembled in the room to attend services conducted by visiting clergymen such as Jane Patterson's husband, the Rev. Adoniram J. Patterson of Roxbury Universalist Church in Boston. Because of the Rickers' largesse, ministers were rarely in short supply at the resort. In August of 1894, the Hill-Top reported that "the priesthood is well represented at Poland by five of the leading members." Consequently, the faithful usually had several times of worship and styles of liturgy from which to choose. On a typical Sabbath in August of 1897, for example, the Reverend Father John A. Conway of Washington, DC, celebrated mass in the early morning. The Reverend W. P. Lewis of Philadelphia followed later in the morning with a second service during which he delivered a sermon entitled "A Day of Judgement." Finally, Julius Gassauer, assisted by the Reverend Doctor Stone of Chicago, conducted his regular meeting in the dining room that evening. The moonlighting headwaiter preached from John 14:27 on the topic of peace.83

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Besides the serious business of concerts, balls, lectures, and worship, the music hall exposed patrons to "entertainments of a light and pleasing nature." The performers, however, did not take their work lightly. For impersonator and humorist Charles Williams, the shows provided money to attend Harvard College. Lacking the status conferred by an Ivy-League education, many veterans of the resort circuit assumed the title of professor and the authority of science to legitimate their talents. The Hill-Top described the work of Professor Zanoni, for instance, as the science of thought transference. The paper likened the sensitive nervous system of "the greatest mind reader of the nineteenth century" to "the sensitized plate of the photographer."

To make a living, the entertainers traveled from hotel to hotel during the summertime. The visit to Poland Spring by monologue artist William R. Page in early September of 1899 marked his forty-second resort appearance of the season. The actor staged the comedy "Aunt Matilda's Suitor" alone, a feat requiring him to play four roles, don seven different costumes, and make twenty-four changes in thirty-five minutes.

August 1894, 5; "Sunday Services," Hill-Top, 22 August 1897, 8.

The skit, which drew "one of the largest audiences of the season" to the music hall, "met with success."

Every once in a while, a high-brow act took the stage. Reflecting its genteel bias, the Hill-Top described the drama performed by Ella Chamberlin and Emma Tuttle-James in 1898 as "one of the most satisfactory given by the various entertainers who visit Poland Spring." Thorough refinement distinguished the duos' work. In contrast to the "clever" magicians, mind readers, and monologuers, Chamberlin and Tuttle-James were admired because they were consummate artists.

An amusement committee composed of and funded by guests took responsibility for booking the performers. Each season patrons made their pledges to the cause by signing a subscription list posted near the news counter in the hotel lobby. The $1200 collected in 1893 paid for a full schedule of musical and literary programs, as well as the resort baseball team. The availability of the money made it possible to guarantee performers the certainty of set fees rather than having to offer them the uncertainty of post-performance collections. Poland Spring was one of the few resorts to adopt this practice, which, in the estimation of the Hill-Top,

"Page, the Impersonator," Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 28; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 19.

"Tuesday's Entertainment," Hill-Top, 24 July 1898, 3; Hill-Top, 29 August 1897, 10.
attracted a class of entertainers "a hundred per cent. better than those usually heard at a summer hotel."

The construction of an annex in 1887 added even more space to the Poland Spring House for social and leisure activities. Unlike the earlier additions, the thirty-by-sixty-foot, three-story annex was a free-standing structure connected to the southwest wing of the hotel by a covered walkway. The ground floor contained a bowling alley, billiard parlor, pool room, and gymnasium "with all modern inventions for sport and health." Also on the first floor, men could have their personal grooming needs attended to in the barber shop. A club room on the second floor offered gentlemen a cozy hideaway where they could relax in comfortable furniture and peruse "the leading newspapers of the day" -- papers such as the New York Tribune, which promised to provide vacationers "away from the city . . . the exact truth of what is going on at home, without distortion, inaccuracy, or hysterics." Twenty-four apartments filled the remainder of the upper two floors and increased the capacity of a facility "taxed to the utmost."

Time spent in the annex was meant to be anything but taxing. On cool summer mornings, bowling enthusiasts gathered in the "pretty" alley to pursue their favorite pastime.

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88 Poland Spring House, (1887), unpagedinated; Hill-Top, 23 July 1899, 29; Poland Spring Centennial, 67.
During the 1894 season, Bostonians Josiah Oakes and A. R. Mitchell proved to be the "boss" bowlers, rolling up many "excellent" scores on the smooth lanes. Other sportsmen found the nearby Briggs' improved billiard tables "very useful." They played the game with such reckless zeal, though, that windows in the room had to be protected from errant shots with wire netting. G. W. Watson, who arrived at Poland Spring in 1899 as the victor of a recent New York Athletic Club tournament, presented no such threat. This "very fine pool player" easily won a hotel tournament, despite spotting his opponent, C. A. Morrogh, twenty-five balls on the way to one hundred."

Guests could follow a hard workout in the gymnasium with a therapeutic massage. In 1894 Horace Ettridge, a trained nurse and masseur from New York City, brought his dozen years of experience to Poland Spring. The next season, the highly respected Mrs. Elizabeth Robinson, a graduate of the "celebrated" Posse Gymnasium in Boston, replaced Ettridge. Skilled in the art of Swedish massage, Lizzie Robinson had the ability to revivify "the system when fatigued" and restore "full muscular activity and strength." Her treatments offered rest and refreshment to those weary in both mind and body. The Hill-Top reported that Robinson's "refined and gentle manner" especially pleased the sick and "those of nervous tempera-


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ment," making the "massage artiste . . . a pleasant and agreeable companion for the invalid."

In 1899 masseuse Hilma Haglund took up residence in room 320 of the annex. A graduate of the institute run in Stockholm, Sweden, by Professor Unman, the so-called Edison of massage, Miss Haglund relieved muscle tension, headaches, fatigue, and nervousness through the application of her "deft" fingers. Promotional announcements for her massage and medical gymnastic sessions advised clients that "to continue these treatments regularly is to throw medicine to the dogs, for you will have no use for it." Many guests put the claim to the test, as Haglund's services were "in constant demand."

After exercising and massaging their muscles, guests could have their bodies beautified. As the Hill-Top reminded readers in 1898, "manicuring is a necessity these days when every attention is given to personal appearance and comfort." Women entrusted their hands, as well as their feet, faces, and hair, to "that most estimable and artistic little lady, Miss Jacobs." Her skillful fingers clipped and filed nails, massaged feet, cleansed facial pores, and shampooed, cut,

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91 "Miss Haglund," Hill-Top, 9 July 1899, 19; Hill-Top, 16 July 1899, 3; Hill-Top, 6 August 1899, 24; Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 19; Hill-Top, 19 August 1900, 6.
curled, and arranged "hair in the most charming manner." More to the point, the "artistic taste and extensive experience" of the "indispensable" Miss Jacobs transformed her customers into "particularly attractive" ladies upon whom "gentlemen like to look."

Gentlemen, in contrast, had an easier time of it. Since physical appearance comprised less of their identity, the Hill-Top did not attempt to coax them into a battery of beauty treatments each week. A visit to M. J. Frazier, or his assistant, in the barber shop for a haircut, possibly a shave, and maybe a manicure, made a man sufficiently presentable to participate in the active social life of the Poland Spring House.

Renovations undertaken in 1893 reaffirmed the Rickers' commitment to provide their patrons with opportunities for social interaction, leisure, and consumption. It also demonstrated their willingness to bring the latest technological innovations to the Poland Spring House, no matter the expense. Doing so was good business and this house after all was part counting house, in addition to home away from home, castle on the hilltop, and social mecca. Even the grandilo-

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"Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 14; Hill-Top, 6 August 1899, 7; Hill-Top, 14 August 1898, 4; Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 5; "Artistic Dressing of Hair," Hill-Top, 1 July 1900, 2; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 22 July 1900, 14.

"Souvenir List, (1900); Hill-Top, 3 July 1904, 22.
quent William Murray acknowledged that the noble art of entertaining guests was also a "noble business."

To provide patrons with more entertainment facilities, the 1893 expansion extended the southwest wing of the hotel another one hundred feet. The addition off of the music hall created space for an amusement hall and store. On the upper floors, the design by architect George M. Coombs of Lewiston also added twenty "handsome" bath suites to the room count. Other improvements included the placement of awnings over the piazza and many of the windows, plus construction of a porte cochere at the entrance.

Compared to the adjacent music hall, the amusement room was "smaller and cozier." This made it an ideal place for small group activities such as card playing. By far the most popular game at Poland Spring was progressive euchre. Described as being "particularly well suited to social gatherings," the rules of euchre assigned players to tables of four, where teams of two competed against one another. Since partners changed at the end of each game, participants had the chance to intermingle extensively. The objective was to win as many games as possible and by so doing, to progress toward the head table. At the end of a prescribed length of time, usually two hours, the competition ceased and the hosts

presented prizes to the male and female players who had accumulated the most points."

The chance to converse, compete, consume, and accumulate attracted eighty-eight contestants, the largest number of the season, to the amusement room on August 20, 1897 for what the Hill-Top described as the "usual" round of Friday evening euchre. After seventeen games, the high scores were fourteen among the ladies and thirteen among the gentlemen. The victorious women went away with a center piece, cut-glass bonbon dish, bureau scarf, lunch set, box of stationery, and silver paper cutter. The prize-winning men received a statuette, cut-glass bottle, pocket book, and picture frame."

The following year witnessed an unusual round of progressive euchre at the resort. It was moved from the amusement room to the music hall, was suffused with patriotic overtones, and was used as a means of raising money to support the war effort against Spain. Organized by Mrs. Maginnis, the event was "one of the largest and most successful euchre parties ever held at Poland Spring." As the price of participation, ninety-two players subscribed $152 to the local branch of the Women's Patriotic Aid Society. Louis Wareham and his assistants decorated the stage with a six-by-nine-foot flag.

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"R. F. Foster, Foster's Encyclopedia of Games (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1897), 244-5.

""Progressive Euchre," Hill-Top, 29 August 1897, 3."
made out of red geraniums, white asters, and blue verbenas. They also hung real flags from every chandelier, lined mantel pieces with ferns and wild flowers, and placed bouquets on the piano and center table. No detail escaped the patriotic fervor, not the scorecards bearing an illustration of the flag and bound together with red, white, and blue ribbons, not the playing cards featuring the stars and stripes on the back, not the prize table covered in red, white, and blue, and certainly not the prizes themselves. They included a two-pound drum of candy covered with red, white, and blue satin, a tri-color sash belt with military buckle, a silk American flag, and a book entitled *Poems of American Patriotism*. The master of ceremonies, Mr. Ivers, made a point of assuring the audience that all of the souvenirs had been purchased with donated money, not with the funds subscribed to "the noble cause" of war relief. The evening ended with a hearty rendition of the first and last verses of the "Star-Spangled Banner," all through which Mr. Boyd waved the flag he had been awarded for his second place finish in the evening's competition."

The "noble" game of whist rivaled euchre in popularity. The lessons offered by Misses Noble and Trist helped to promote the "subtle" art of whist playing; so, too, did the lectures illustrated with stereopticon views presented by the "whist queen," Miss Kate Wheelock. Once guests mastered the intricacies of whist, they found it possessed the virtues

required of a Victorian parlor game -- the chance to wile away a leisurely evening, to share the company of friends, and to compete for prizes. Contestants vied for a wide assortment of examples of Gilded-Age material culture, including silver cups, sofa pillows, table spreads, pin boxes, bon-bon spoons, ink wells, desk sets, candlesticks, umbrella straps, belt buckles, cigar cutters, pocket rules, paper cutters, engagement tablets, and moustache combs."

Many of the prizes undoubtedly came from the art store located at the far end of the hotel's southwest wing. Short of traveling to Lewiston and Auburn or mail ordering from one of the many businesses in Portland, Boston, or New York that advertised in the Hill-Top, guests had to satisfy their craft-making, gift-giving, and souvenir-hunting needs at this well-stocked, "perfect" facsimile of an Oriental bazaar. Operated by the friendly Mrs. Nasseem Mallouf, the shop showcased abundance, celebrated beauty, promoted domesticity, and transformed luxury into necessity. On the "overflowing" racks and shelves, shoppers found "myriads of articles essential to a lady's happiness." The store stocked jackets, wraps, belts, lace, ribbon, and dress trimming "calculated for the decoration of the person," as well as Baghdad curtains, Persian

rugs, and Turkish and Syrian hand embroideries calculated for the decoration of the home.100

Another popular item, kimonos, appealed to both a modern taste for exotic fashions and an antimodern fascination with the Oriental. Announcements in the Hill-Top promised that slipping on one of these "dreams of loveliness" would make a woman feel comfortable and attractive, while setting her at perfect ease. Those who did not believe that kimonos had become a "necessity to the well-equipped woman" risked not being counted among the "in" crowd. Playing further upon status anxieties, the paper urged husbands whose wives lacked this trendy fashion statement to head straight to the store and "select the one of the most becoming color."101

Antimodernism and consumerism also combined in the rage for arts and crafts projects. To satisfy the demand for authentic hands-on work, the store offered supplies for and


instruction in the "highest art of embroidery." The abundant supply of needlework included an "unlimited variety of stitches of all styles and nations." The appeal of the craft lay not only in the decorative beauty of finished products, but also in the genuineness attributed to items made manually rather than mechanically. For beginners who planned to pass the winter with needle and thread in hand, the Hill-Top advised that a few lessons taught by the skillful Miss Cummings would be of "great service."102

Patrons of the resort often cloaked their consumption as charity. Those women who wanted to be part of the arts and crafts movement without any of the embroidering could salve their consciences, while procuring decorations of "wondrous intricacy and beauty" for their homes, by purchasing ready-made Mexican drawn work. The wife of an Episcopal clergyman living in southern Texas supplied large quantities of the items to Vesta Ricker. Mrs. Hiram W. Ricker then sold these "finest and most superior" examples of the needlework arts as

102Hill-Top, 6 August 1899, 12; "The Art Store," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 3; "Mexican Drawn Work," Hill-Top, 9 August 1896, 2; Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 3; Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 14.

The relationship between the arts and crafts movement and Victorian consumer culture is explored more fully in Lears, No Place of Grace, 60-96; Gordon, "Cozy, Charming, and Artistic," 124-48.
an act of "charity work" from her cottage located behind the Mansion House.103

Patrons' admiration for handicrafts and desire to be charitable also benefitted the local Shaker village. During the summer of 1888, traders from the Sabbathday Lake community began regularly making the three-mile trek to the Poland Spring House to sell their fancy goods several evenings a week. Besides bringing along a refreshing air of premodern tranquility and simplicity, Sisters such as the kindly and well-known Aurelia Mace arrived bearing valises filled with poplarware boxes, plush rugs, fir balsam pillows, horse hair brushes, and many other wares produced by "their industrious and deft fingers." The proceeds from the sales of these items, the Hill-Top assured purchasers, went "into the general coffers of the community."104

The coming together of the religious and resort communities highlighted the vivid contrasts between antimodernity and modernity. Unlike the Shakers, who set themselves apart from the world, venerated the work ethic, and rejected materialism, the patrons of the resort embraced Victorian sociability, legitimated the leisure ethic, and consumed

103"Mexican Drawn Work," Hill-Top, 9 August 1896, 2; "The Art Store," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 3; Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 2; Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 2.

compulsively. Embodying the latter constellation of modern values, the Poland Spring House became in part a social mecca where the people of progress could conspicuously preen, promenade, party, and play.

**Technological Show Place**

Nothing demonstrated the predominantly modern aspirations of the resort's clientele so well as the technology made available for their convenience. From the outset, the Rickers promoted the hotel's state-of-the-art lighting, plumbing, and sewage systems. A Springfield gas machine located underground a hundred feet to the north of the building produced fuel for lighting. Running water flowed from a sixteen-barrel tank on the uppermost floor. A steam pump located in the barreling house moved the water from the spring up the hill to the hotel through yards of enameled iron pipe. Waste water drained into a common cesspool and then passed through another network of pipes to a sewer located to the west of the building and in the opposite direction of the spring.\(^{105}\)

As business people whose success depended upon the healthfulness of the resort, the Rickers paid special attention to sanitation. Long before "vacation typhoid" became a plague threatening the state's tourist industry, the brothers moved to protect the integrity of their chief asset -- the

\(^{105}\)"Poland Mineral Spring," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 10 June 1876; *Wonderful Medicinal Virtues*, [13].
water supply. In 1885 they contracted with Portland civil engineer Edward C. Jordan, an authority on hydraulics and sanitary science, to devise a new plumbing and sewage system. The plan he submitted in 1886 called for the storage of water for wash bowls and water closets in separate holding tanks on the fourth and fifth floors of the hotel. Exhaust pipes connected to the plumbing vented fumes to stacks on the roof. Drain and cement sewer pipe carried waste water from both the Poland Spring and Mansion Houses a half-mile underground to irrigation fields behind the Cow Barn, far away from the site of the spring.\textsuperscript{106}

Put in place over two years and at an expense of several thousand dollars, the system met with favorable reaction. At a time when sanitary laws throughout the country were "tumbled up," "piecemeal," and "antiquated," Dr. A. G. Young of the State Board of Health praised the wisdom of the independent summer resort proprietor who, without official prodding, realized the value of protecting the health of guests. His report on summer resorts specifically cited the new drainage system at Poland Spring as a model sanitary plan. Dr. Wedgwood concurred. His testimonial, along with those of physicians from Portland and Washington, DC, complimenting the

Rickers on the "perfectness" of the site's sewerage and ventilation appeared in the hotel's 1887 promotional catalog.107

Referring to the sewage system and all the other "modern devices for comfort and luxury," the same pamphlet touted the hotel as "A Perfect Home for Its Patrons." Improvements to the facility in 1887 included "a commodious steam passenger elevator, with the most approved safety appliances attached; a perfect and complete system of fire escapes;" and electric annuncicators. In ensuing years, the Rickers also had workmen add a fire extinguishing system fed by rooftop water tanks, automatic fire alarms, and electric lights. Thus by 1898, the annual announcement for the summer season proclaimed that the hotel featured "every convenience of the most modern metropoli-itan house."108

The Hill-Top reinforced for readers the benefits of modern technology by hearkening back to aboriginal times. The paper contrasted the Indian wrapped in skins warming himself


108Ibid., unpaginated; Poland Mineral Spring Water: The Story of Its History and Its Marvellous Curative Properties (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1883), 14; "At Poland Spring," Portland Daily Press, 1889; Poland Spring Centennial, 75; Announcement Twenty-Third Annual Summer Season Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1898), 3.
beside smoldering embers at the spring and the ancient stagecoach traveler slumbering in the old Mansion House with the present-day guest residing in a royal apartment outfitted with "furnishings of the most modern and expensive production." The constant across the ages was comfort; the difference was the impact of accumulated progress. According to the editors, "constant vigilance and unceasing effort in the line of progress" had over time resulted in ever "greater conveniences for comfort."\textsuperscript{109}

Fascination with technology, combined with an abundance of leisure, led to the construction of a photographic studio in 1894. Designed in the Queen Anne style, the "exceedingly handsome" structure was connected to the annex by a covered veranda. The new facility made obsolete an observatory darkroom on the roof of the hotel that had existed since at least 1889. The addition of three darkrooms stimulated photographic activity at the resort. The \textit{Hill-Top} reported in 1894 that "now it is no uncommon sight to see parties of a half dozen or more starting out through the country, all with cameras in their hands."\textsuperscript{110}

For the less adventurous, the building also included a professional photographic studio where guests could purchase views and have portraits taken. The Notman Photographic

\textsuperscript{109} "Poland Once Again," \textit{Hill-Top}, 2 July 1899, 1-3.

Company, a renowned Boston firm in the "van-guard" of the new technology, managed the business. Mr. Ness oversaw the operation during the first summer and relieved the resident photographer, Denys B. O. Bourdon, for brief periods in subsequent years. Bourdon, a long-time employee of the company, had earned a reputation as an accomplished portrait photographer able to combine accuracy with artistry. Evidence of his "exquisite" work graced the walls of the hotel. It also illustrated the pages of the Hill-Top and the promotional literature published by Hiram Ricker and Sons. The admiring editors of the resort newspaper encouraged visitors to take advantage of Bourdon's superior skill at fixing happy expressions on glass plates, assuring them that "there is a little vanity in us all" and reminding them that it was easier to look one's best away from "the hurry and bustle of city life."111

Commercial Counting House

Beneath the photographic and literary images of the hotel as genteel house, noble castle, social mecca, and technological show place lay the economic reality. For the proprietors of the Poland Spring House, commerce was king. An observant

111"See for Yourself," Hill-Top, 3 July 1898, 22; Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 3; Hill-Top, 11 September 1898, 3; "Mr. Denys Bourdon Returns," Hill-Top, 15 July 1922, 3; "The Studio," Hill-Top, 4 August 1895, 4; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 8 September 1895, 4; Hill-Top, 9 July 1899, 15; Hill-Top, 16 July 1899, 7; Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 2.
reporter could see telltale signs of business activity all about the hotel in 1896. At the front desk, a flurry of guests checked in and settled their accounts. Nearby, the popular attendants at the news counter, Miss Byrne and Mr. Abbey, sold souvenirs and handed out mail. Those patrons requiring more immediate contact with the outside world than provided by a newspaper or letter visited Miss Anderson at the adjacent telegraph office. Far from abetting escape from modern life, Western Union service afforded "business men every opportunity of having immediate connections with their places of business and all stock exchanges." On the other side of the main stairway, Harriet Cole, a student at nearby Hebron Academy in Buckfield, Maine, dispensed hundreds of free samples at the water counter. The payoff came later when guests ordered cases of water to tide them over at home until their return to Poland Spring the next season. A fire and burglar-proof safe for the keeping of the guests' valuables and the Rickers' receipts anchored the bustling lobby.\(^{113}\)

From a private office located across the hall from the water counter, Edward Ricker presided over a family empire that encompassed a thousand acres, dozens of buildings, and hundreds of employees. Although he was the eldest son of Hiram and Janette Ricker, EP had earned his position by deeds

\(^{113}\)"The Green Bottle," Hill-Top, 2 August 1896, 1-2; Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 5; Poland Spring Hotels (1889), 24; "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated.
more than by birth. Possessing both a vision of greatness and a willingness to work hard, the "chief architect" of Poland Spring had rescued the family farm from creditors and then fashioned it into one of the region's leading resorts. The Lewiston Journal attributed his success to tireless energy, supreme genius, prophetic faith, good judgment, thorough wisdom, and executive ability. Columnist Arthur G. Staples described his friend as a consummate "hotel-man" -- gentle, genteel, attentive, and kind. These qualities brought him a wide circle of friends and a loyal clientele.1

Although he possessed the management skills to create Hiram Ricker and Sons, Edward, like his father, could not keep his pursuit of personal wealth in check. Not content to have constructed a potentially lucrative tourist mecca, his brain teemed with additional plans to develop the hilltop. Furthermore, it percolated with schemes to gain him a fortune rivaling those of his well-heeled guests. During the monetary debates and gold rushes of the 1890s, Ricker invested heavily in mining stocks. On the eve of the 1896 presidential election, he plotted to profit from an anticipated "big drop" in the wheat futures market. His ambitions, however, never quite kept pace with his resources. Despite the popularity of the water and the resort, huge expenses kept the finances of

the corporation in a perpetually precarious state. Visions of "overflowing coffers" were only an illusion.\footnote{Leading Business Men," Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section, 6-11 May 1899, 3; Edw[ard] P. Ricker, Correspondence, Boston, MA, to Al[van Bolster Ricker], 26-30 October 1896, Private Collection; "Ever Young and Fair," HILL-TOP, 4 July 1897, 2.}

Building and running a first-class summer city was not cheap. In 1893 Hiram W. Ricker calculated that the family spent nearly $120,000 operating the two hotels. The payroll amounted to $37,000, capital expenses to $31,000, miscellaneous costs to $19,000, building supplies to $17,000, and food purchases to $16,000. Property taxes increased the total outlay by several thousand dollars, prompting an hour and a half long lecture on "awful taxes" by Edward Ricker at the Poland town meeting a few years later.\footnote{"Hearing on Petition," 170-2; Delmer C. Wilson, Diary, New Gloucester, ME, 13 March 1899, USS; Annual Report (Poland, ME: Town of Poland, 1902), 3, 17, 29.}

A slim profit margin fired Ricker's frustration with property taxes. Revenues from bookings could have only modestly exceeded expenditures. Attendance at the Poland Spring House in 1893, for example, came to 25,682, an average of 208 guests for each day of the four month season from June to October, although most people came during July and August. If everyone

For the fiscal year ending in February of 1902, the real estate owned by Hiram Ricker and Sons amounted to 29 percent of Poland's total valuation. Consequently, the Ricker's $4000 tax bill accounted for 26 percent of the town's revenue.
had paid the highest daily rate at the height of the season, the Rickers would have grossed only $128,000. In reality, most guests paid a weekly rate ranging from $28-80, depending upon the room and date selected. Thus while the 450 rooms in the hotel were often full to capacity, the coffers were not. 116

Of course, the Rickers had many other revenue streams—souvenirs, the art store, the photo studio, the Mansion House, and most important, the water. Whatever profits the business earned, however, usually went right back into improvements for the resort. While this investment strategy built up a property valued in 1892 at a million and one quarter dollars by one potential buyer, it left the cash-strapped Rickers constantly dependent on creditors to finance the construction, renovations, and expansions of the Poland Spring House during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. 117

By 1889 the Ricker brothers had taken out five mortgages, two on the family farm and three on the Poland Spring House and hotel lot, from three lenders amounting to $76,000. During the 1890s, one regular patron of the resort, Boston businessman Nelson Bartlett, emerged as the lone creditor. In 1892 Bartlett provided a $25,000 mortgage on the hotel lot.

116"Bubbles," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 9; Poland Spring (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons', 1893), 15; "Quarter Century," Boston Daily Globe, 4 March 1897; Announcement (1898), 1.

He then bought out the interest in two mortgages held by Charles Morss and in another held by Melissa Downer. Six years later, Bartlett allowed the Rickers to consolidate their loans by extending them a $65,000 mortgage due in five years with five percent interest payable semiannually.118

Nelson Bartlett's money helped finance one of the last major renovations to the Poland Spring House during the nineteenth century. In time for the 1898 season, the Rickers had "that dry goods box of a tower . . . rounded out majestically" to give it a more "prosperous and inviting atmosphere." The collaboration of architects George C. Coombs, Eugene J. Gibbs, and Harry C. Wilkinson also resulted in the removal of the "ungainly piazzas" surrounding the tower and their replacement with artistic balconies from which "Juliets might be wooed." Yet again, antimodern allusions promoted the addition of modern amenities.119

It is fitting that a building of such vivid contrasts stood at the center of the city of vivid contrasts. Like the Mansion House, the Poland Spring House was shaped by the

118Deeds, Book 98, 13-5; Book 104, 120-1; Book 110, 553; Book 116, 354; Book 130, 359-60; Book 133, 311-3; Book 145, 499-501; Book 159, 546-7; Book 178, 286-90; Book 222, 291, ACRD.

The Rickers did not actually retire the 1898 mortgage until 1911.

values of antimodernity and modernity. For some guests, the hotel, in both its guises as genteel home and noble castle, provided welcome escape from the modern world of competitive commerce and social diversity. For other patrons, the facility was a modern mecca of fashion, wealth, and culture that celebrated sociability, legitimated leisure, encouraged consumption, and promoted progress. Finally, for the proprietors, the hotel was both a family legacy to be cherished and a financial commodity to be mortgaged. The same contrasting values that shaped the architecture of the built environment would also transform the landscape of the natural environment on the hilltop.
"A CITY OF VIVID CONTRASTS":
ANTIMODERNITY AND MODERNITY AT THE POLAND SPRING RESORT,
1860-1900

BY

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DISSERTATION

Volume II
Chapters V-IX

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PART III

LANDSCAPES: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
CHAPTER V

THE SPRING: "THE MINISTRY OF PURE WATER"

The writer from the Lewiston Falls Journal who stopped at the home of Hiram Ricker on the mid July afternoon in 1860 came to see what had already become known as the "famous mineral spring in Poland." In a field located a short distance from the Poland Spring House, water bubbled up at the rate of eight gallons per minute from crevices in a ledge of hard black trap. The journalist reported that "we never tasted of purer, clearer water than this." The article attributed the water's freedom from "foreign substances" to the natural filtration process it went through and the careful handling it received from Mr. Ricker. Noting the significance of the find, the reporter remarked that "the very pureness of the water" had effected "remarkable cures."

In the four decades after this visit, the Rickers and their publicists followed the lead of the Lewiston journalist and made purity the main asset of Poland Water. They, too, linked the product with the ideal of purity through references

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2The Rickers referred to the water sold from the spring in three ways: Poland Mineral Spring Water, Poland Spring Water, and Poland Water. For the sake of consistency and economy, I have generally used the shortest title.
to geological convulsions, early settlers, sound business practices, mineral analysis, medicinal virtues, and miraculous healings. In part, the emphasis on purity reflected real public health concerns about the safety of water supplies during the late nineteenth century. More importantly, it also reflected concerns about the moral state of Gilded-Age American society.

Historian James Harvey Young has argued that turn-of-the-century reform movements such as the crusade for food and drug control grew out of "a deep worry about 'purity'." He has written that during this era, "business, government at all levels, social conduct, even the bloodlines of the nation's populace seemed threatened with pollution and required cleaning up." At Poland Spring, "deep worry" gave way to full-fledged cultural obsession. An 1895 Hill-Top article entitled "Crystal Purity," for example, preached that "to the pure all things are pure, hence the most impure may imagine themselves pure when they gaze into the pure crystal of the Poland Spring Carafe, and witness the purity of its contents; and become purer for the vision and the thought." Pure Poland Water was promoted as possessing the power to cleanse the body of "evil humors," clear the mind of "distorted fancies," and transform, if not transfigure, the soul. For many guests of
the resort, the route to paradise went through the Spring House.\(^3\)

Visiting springs had been fashionable in the United States since the 1760s. A century passed, however, before drinking spring water became popular. In the interim, the leisure class expanded and concerns about public health multiplied. Reports about adulterated and mislabeled products, culminating in the early twentieth-century muckraking exposés about the patent medicine and meat packing industries, raised doubts about the nation's food and drug supplies. Meanwhile periodic typhoid and yellow fever epidemics aroused concerns about urban congestion and sanitation. Thus when the Rickers warned in the 1880s that "modern modes of living" and


Boyer and Pivar have both argued that reformers attempted to purify urban life by imposing on it the moral order of the village.
diseases caused by using impure water brought many thousands to "Death's door," they found a receptive audience."

The means of bringing order to the public health crisis were professionalization, regulation, and technology. Professionals promoted and managed the advance of purity; regulators mandated and monitored standards of purity; while technology promised to protect natural purity or sterilize impurity. It is no coincidence that Poland Water gained its popularity during a period when doctors and scientists established the American Public Health Association; Congressmen debated 190 pure food and drug laws; Maine legislators created a State Board of Health; and civil engineers designed new municipal water and sewage systems. The appeal of purity explains not only the success of Hiram Ricker and Sons, but also the increase of mineral water companies in the United States from 387 in 1870 to 2816 in 1900."

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'Carl Bridenbaugh, "Baths and Watering Places of Colonial America," William and Mary Quarterly 3 (1946): 179; Hill-Top, 27 August 1899, 19; Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1883), 68-70; Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1887), unpaginated.

Pharmacist O. W. Jones of Auburn, Maine, offered readers of the Hill-Top a solution to the problem of fraudulent medicines. He placed an advertisement in an 1899 issue of the paper informing patrons that "Pure Drugs taken in Poland Water ought to Produce Health."

Poland Mineral Spring Water: The History of Its Discovery

In this cultural setting, the Rickers built the promotion of Poland Water on four cornerstones, the first of which was the history of purity. An 1876 pamphlet opened with the statement that "many have wanted to know how this Spring was

Very few of the regulatory measures introduced were enacted. Prior to passage of the landmark Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906, Congress only consented to regulate tea in 1883, oleomargarine in 1886, and meat inspection in 1890 and 1891.

The long legislative struggle to enact the Pure Food and Drug Act has strongly influenced the historiography of the movement. Most interpretations focus on the regulatory process, claiming that government intervention came about when legislation served the best interests of the business community, when scientists and reformers sufficiently aroused public interest, or when regulation served the interests of a combination of groups. The economic, or "business capture," argument reduces the emphasis on purity to a ploy for profits. The political, or "public interest," thesis limits the intent of the pure food and drug movement to improved public health. The synthesis of the two approaches, the "pluralist" model, offers a more complex view of the regulatory process, but it still overlooks the moral interest in purity identified by James Harvey Young.


As with the historiography of the pure food and drug movement, historians disagree over the motives behind efforts to ensure pure water supplies. Nelson Manfred Blake has attributed the development of municipal water systems to concern for public health. Earl Finbar Murphy, on the other hand, has argued in his examination of water purity in Wisconsin that "cash consciousness" predominated over concepts of public interest and moral utterances. See Nelson Manfred Blake, Water for the Cities: A History of the Urban Water Supply Problem in the United States (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1956), 260-4; Earl Finbar Murphy Water Purity: A Study in Legal Control of Natural Resources (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), 26.
discovered." The Rickers obliged inquirers by recounting their ancestors' "purely accidental" discovery of the water's efficacy. Over the next several years, the scope of the history expanded and the focal point became more well defined. The Rickers remembered the past not only as the basis of progress and origin of nobility, but also as the source of purity.6

By 1883 the Rickers had settled on a history of the spring. In the water pamphlet for that year, they took readers back to a time when the "pristine forces" forged the geological landscape of the hilltop. During the "era of upheaval," molten granite flowed into fissures created by the folding and tilting of gneiss slates. In the subsequent old red sandstone era, porphyritic rock smashed its way through the gneiss bedrock forming veins ranging in thickness from a few inches up to fifteen feet. The spring flowed through one such vein. This geological structure accounted for the spring's "renowned freedom from organic matter, and its medicinal properties."7

Following the flow of water back to its source "at the center of the world" took one back further in time and thereby

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6 Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1876), 3-4.

7 Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 4.

The same account appears in H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland Embracing a Period of Over a Century (Mechanic Falls, ME: Poole Brothers, 1890), 31.
closer to purity. An 1890 water pamphlet contrasted the "superficial earth" with the geological formations of "primeval creation" through which the spring rose. The former could taint the water with impurities; the latter gave to the water its "first and foremost characteristic" -- purity.  

Although he substituted a romantic notion of Nature for the scientific forces of geology, William Murray likewise traced the spring's purity and healing powers to the prehistoric past. In 1890 he wrote that Nature had created the hilltop at Poland Spring ages ago out of primeval rock. "From a fissure near the crest of this magnificent mound of oldest rock," Murray continued, "she poured, from deepest depths beyond the guess of man, a stream of water so pure that he who sees remembers it ever after as a marvel." The marvelous spring's properties included the ability to bring dying people back to "health and vigor."

According to the Rickers' history, the "aboriginal savages" and "wild beasts" were the first to benefit from the water. Plows and spades had turned up physical evidence of the former aboriginal landscape in the form of "the arrow of flint, the hatchet and chisel of stone, the spear-point of quartz, [and] the fish-hook of bone." An 1890 pamphlet surmised that the ancients "resorted" to the spring to cure

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"Murray, "Poland Spring Hotel," 1-2."
their infirmities centuries before the arrival of white settlers. Furthermore, it speculated that the spring was "fashionable a thousand years before the Norsemen discovered America" and so well known that it had drawn from "distant nations and tribes" visitors in search of health and life. In more recent times, a squaw named Moll Locket had continued to frequent the spot even after the Rickers took up residence there. Locket was remembered for three things: outwitting a Catholic priest, converting to Protestantism, and being "as fond of ardent spirit as she was of Poland Water."\(^{10}\)

Although Moll Locket had fallen prey to one of the evils of modern life, the Indians were typically praised for remaining faithful to their traditional customs. The 1890 pamphlet, for instance, complimented the "red race" for recognizing that the natural remedies it used were "gifts of the Great Spirit," as well as for keeping close to Nature, observing her closely, and living in harmony with her laws. In contrast, moderns were chided for despising "the healing qualities of pure air, pure water, [and] pure sunshine." An illustration of the Indians' perceived superior relationship with nature appeared in *Poland Spring Centennial*. It depicted two men kneeling beside a pool of water. With cupped hand

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\(^{10}\) *Poland Mineral Spring Water* (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1891), 8-9; *Poland Spring Water*, unpaginated; *Poland Mineral Spring Water* (1883), 9-10, 16, 18.
raised to parched lips, one Indian helped his haggard-looking partner, Chief Poland, "appease his burning thirst."\(^{11}\)

The Indians were admired not only for their knowledge, but also for their guardianship of nature. The sight of the Penobscot encampment at Poland Spring carried one observer, publicist George Haynes, back "in imagination to the primitive days when the spring was to their ancestors a sacred fount, and they partook of the sparkling water at this, nature's reservoir." Like the primeval geology, the ancient race had protected the spring's purity and for this reason the Rickers included the Indians in the history of the hilltop.\(^{12}\)

Although the Rickers had known about the spring for many years, the business of selling the water began in 1859. In that pivotal year, the water produced several "notable" cures; the first doctor began prescribing its use; and Hiram Ricker sold his first three gallons for fifteen cents. Thereafter, the use of the "truly wonderful Spring Water," the Rickers claimed, "increased in a ratio unprecedented in the history of any other mineral water on the globe."\(^{13}\)

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\(^{11}\)Poland Spring Water, unpaginated; Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir (S. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 8.


\(^{13}\)Wonderful Medicinal Virtues of the Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, [1877]), 2; [Hiram Ricker], "Poland Spring," [1884], TMs, 1, Androscoggin Historical Society, Auburn, ME (hereafter AHS).
One of the first medicinal applications of the water outside of the family occurred in June 1859 when a friend brought his gravely ill daughter to Poland Spring for treatment. She was afflicted with a case of constipation that had confounded the best medical minds in Portland. Upon the girl's arrival, Hiram Ricker sent his twelve-year-old son, Edward, to the spring to fill a pail for her. After drinking the water for a few days, the patient was well enough to return home.14

During the same summer, neighbor William Schellinger had two experiences that strengthened the Rickers' faith in the medicinal quality of the water. The first arose from Schellinger's habit of drinking from the spring whenever his work brought him near it. He soon realized that the water quieted the kidney pains that had plagued him for two years. The second confirmation began in June when Schellinger received permission from the Rickers to turn a sickly ox, which was barely able to stand, into the pasture near the spring. Much to his surprise, the girth of the "emaciated" animal expanded six inches during the three months it had access to the water. The recovery was so complete that Schellinger sold the ox to a butcher in September.15

14 Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 3; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 4-5; Poland Spring Centennial, 41-2.
15 Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 4-5; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 9.
During the same month, Hiram Ricker traveled to Portland to have a "reliable and scientific physician" test the water. He called upon Eliphalet Clark, one of the doctors who had attended the young girl stricken with constipation. Supported by evidence of the water's medicinal properties, Ricker convinced Dr. Clark to prescribe the remedy on a trial basis. The first patient the doctor treated with the water was Nathan J. Miller. This "very pale, much emaciated" victim of bloody kidney hemorrhages drank four glasses the first day and felt immediate improvement. In a short time, Miller had fully recovered. Impressed by the results, Dr. Clark ordered four to five gallons of the water sent to his office by stage twice a week. Thankful that his life had been saved, Miller entered into a partnership with Hiram Ricker to develop the spring for commercial purposes.16

While Miller provided the financial backing for the venture, Ricker took care of the salesmanship. One journalist described Hiram as "the conscientious expounder of the virtues of this Spring." Another wrote that "he rather talk Poland Water than eat or sleep." As Ricker "talked up" its "won-

16[Ricker], "Poland Spring," 5-8; "Trip to Poland," Lewis­ton Falls Journal, 20 July 1860; Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; Poland Spring Centennial, 43.

Evidence of the Rickers' esteem for "the first physician to prescribe Poland Water" is the photograph and biography of Dr. Eliphalet Clark that appeared in Poland Spring Centennial.

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derful virtues," Poland Water reportedly "acquired a local reputation."

In the early years of the business, friends of the Rickers came from all directions to fill earthenware jugs at the spring. There they found a crude shack sheltering the site. Inside, the water collected in a crevice formed in the outcropping ledge. Over the years, the Rickers enlarged the opening in the rock until it had a capacity of about thirty gallons. Partakers of the water filled their containers from the pool by means of a dipper, which was later replaced by a pail. The charge for this privilege was three cents per gallon. The Rickers established a delivery route to serve local customers unable to travel to the spring. Hiram Ricker himself drove the green express wagon pulled by an old white horse. More distant customers could have forty-six gallon barrels of water sent via rail.

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18 Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 11; Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1889), 12; Poland Spring Water, unpaginated; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6; Poland Spring Centennial, 45-50; Hill-Top, 1898, back cover; Roger L. Gowell, "The Rickers (Riccars) of Poland," 1972, TMs, photocopy, 3, AHS.

The reporter for the Lewiston Falls Journal did not mention any structure sheltering the spring in the account of his 1860 visit. The 1883 pamphlet, however, stated that the Spring House was constructed in 1859 and remodeled in 1866. The 1889 edition dated the origin of the building to 1860.
Someone who had visited the spring in 1869 remembered what the experience had been like for a young boy. The writer recalled that big jugs were "important" equipment on trips to Poland Spring, "for at that time all comers were free to take away as much of the water as they desired for their own use." He described the Spring House as "only a rough little shed" in the midst of a pine grove overgrown with underbrush. The attraction of the site for "seekers for health" was the water, which "flowed from the rock and made its way down the hillside, unchecked by the hand of man."19

Following a brief flurry of interest in the water, "local excitement" waned. During their second year in business, Hiram Ricker and Nathan Miller reached the high-water mark of the partnership, shipping one thousand barrels of water. Thereafter sales decreased and Miller lost interest in the project. Lacking the finances to distribute Poland Water on his own, Ricker had to scale back operations. By 1870 shipments of the product stood at a meager three hundred barrels.20

The 1892 newspaper article gave 1860 and 1862 as the beginning and completion dates of the building's construction.

The size of a standard barrel decreased to forty gallons by 1890.

20"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7-8; Poland Spring Centennial, 47.
Nevertheless, the reputation of the water had spread well beyond Maine during the preceding decade. Correspondence with Sam Ricker, a cousin from Ohio, mentioned that Hiram had been invited to New York in 1870 "to explain the virtues of the Poland water." Assuming that his cousin would be dealing with physicians, Sam advised Hiram to "take counsel of medical men of undoubted reputation." Sam Ricker also offered to do his part to promote the product by distributing circulars in his home state of Ohio.  

Although many observers credited Hiram Ricker with being the "most active and potent" force behind the discovery and development of the spring, his eldest son, Edward, played a vital role. It began with his advice to end the unproductive partnership with Nathan Miller. By 1868 Edward had persuaded his father to buy out Miller's share in the business. As compensation, Miller received a bond issued by the newly created company, Hiram Ricker and Son, headed by Edward. Miller's death complicated the transaction. Dissatisfied with the proposed arrangement, his heirs filed a lawsuit seeking to gain control of the Rickers' property for themselves. After five years of court battles, two arbiters finally ruled in favor of the Ricker family. In the aftermath of the settlement with the Miller estate, Alvan Bolster Ricker joined the

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21Sam Ricker, Amelia, OH, Correspondence, to Hiram Ricker, South Poland, ME, February 1870, [1-3], AHS.
reorganized firm that became known as Hiram Ricker and Sons.²²

Hiram Weston Ricker, the youngest of Hiram and Janette’s three sons, was made a partner in 1880. His preparation for this responsibility began as a youth. During breaks from school, young Hiram worked at the spring and sold jugs of water in Auburn and Lewiston. Considered to be the "natural mechanic" of the family, Hiram was placed in charge of bottling, purchasing, and shipping for the water business.²³

Some hard feelings existed between brothers Edward and Hiram. In a carefully worded letter written in 1880, Oliver Marsh, a brother-in-law of the two men, mentioned Edward was having "trouble" settling upon the value of the property with his father and youngest brother. Marsh hinted that the dispute typified a pattern of favoritism the patriarch of the family showed toward his namesake at the expense of his two older sons. Siding with Edward, Marsh sympathized:

They don’t seem to consider that you have had [to] work so hard to save [the property] for them and they ought to [be] very grateful [sic] to think that they have got so good a home but they are like everybody else the more they get the more they want.

²²"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6; Poland Spring Centennial, 63-6.

Marsh extended to Edward the offer "to do anything in my power to help you settle the trouble."\textsuperscript{24}

Apparently the brothers shielded their domestic squabbles from the public, for biographers lavished only praise on family members. Lewiston journalist Arthur Staples characterized Hiram W. Ricker as "an angel with whiskers -- a man of tenderness and gentle manner." Another account described him as an individual possessing a congenial manner and quick wit, traits that won him many loyal friends. Hiram's wide interests, uncanny foresight, and daring aggressiveness served him well in his role as chief salesman of Poland Water. He was credited with being an unselfish and proud worker who devoted "his entire time . . . to the promotion of Poland water sales, which he guided until weekly shipments aggregated thousands of gallons."\textsuperscript{25}

An 1895 \textit{Hill-Top} article entitled "Poland Spring in the Past" well summarized the Rickers' version of the site's history. It alluded to a geological past when the "pure, sparkling, and health-giving" waters flowed from solid rock "as they had flowed from the beginning of time." This era was followed by the aboriginal past, "long before the advent of the white man," when the Indians visited the spring. During

\textsuperscript{24}O[liver] Marsh, Correspondence, to Ed[ward Ricker], 28 November 1880, AHS.


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the colonial past, the Rickers discovered the "medicinal properties of the spring." In more recent times, Hiram Ricker's faith in the water, whose virtue lay in its "absolute purity," brought it worldwide acclaim. The moral readers were supposed to draw from this history was to "drink Poland water." 26

"A Fountain of Health and a Mountain of Wealth"

The second cornerstone of the water business was the economics of purity. The Rickers needed to convince consumers that under their stewardship the water sold in barrels and bottles was as pure as the water from the spring itself. Showing that the company adhered to sound business practices in the production and distribution of Poland Water was one means of assuring the public. Another message popular with Gilded-Age Americans was the gospel of success. Success, measured by statistical comparisons and certified by professional awards, served as an indicator of trustworthiness.

Momentous changes came to the hilltop in 1876. During the nation's centennial year, Hiram Ricker and Sons registered a trademark for Poland Mineral Spring Water, expanded production facilities at the spring, introduced the "Moses" bottle, and opened the Poland Spring House. The company also issued its first pamphlet promoting the water in 1876. This and subsequent editions blended Hiram's personal style with the

26"Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 15 July 1894, 2.
commercial techniques befitting the modern business his sons had established. The format typically consisted of a history of the family and the spring, details about the business, descriptions of the natural surroundings, information about the water's medicinal powers, and testimonials from dozens of patients and doctors. Through this medium, the Rickers conveyed two intertwined messages: Because Poland Water was natural, it was pure; and because it was pure, it possessed miraculous healing powers.

The reliance the Rickers placed upon pamphlets to communicate with consumers reflected the rise of what Peter Temin has referred to as instrumental business behavior. As national and international markets developed during the nineteenth century, the relationship between producers and consumers stretched to the breaking point. In the new marketplace, customary behavior based upon the traditions of local community was not possible. Replacing it was market-oriented, profit-maximizing, and rational instrumental behavior. Providing labeling, ordering, production, statistical, and medical information about Poland Water allowed customers to make intelligent decisions about its merits.27


Focusing on the relationship between producers and consumers, Temin has argued that "the 1906 Pure Food Act represented an attempt to deal with the disharmony between customary behavior and market structure."
Despite the changing nature of commerce, the Rickers indicated in the 1877 water pamphlet that they still wanted readers to think of themselves as part of a community. The 1879 edition went even further in attempting to translate the tradition of personal contact between merchants and customers to the mail order business by including an engraved illustration of Hiram Ricker. Four years later, a handwritten letter accompanied the picture. The message from Hiram Ricker and Sons expressed the wish that the public might carefully read and conscientiously consider recommendations firmly establishing "the healing virtues of the Poland Water."  

In spite of these attempts to preserve customary marketplace behavior, the information provided in the pamphlets more closely exemplified the trend toward instrumental behavior. When "unscrupulous" and "ambitious" competitors started introducing imitations of Poland Water to the market in the late 1870s, for example, the Rickers used the forum provided by the pamphlets "to make known, as far as we are able, our claims for the genuine POLAND WATER, in language that everybody cannot fail to understand." They instructed consumers to look for the trademark introduced in 1876. Absence of a seal bearing the interlocking initials PMS was "prima facie evidence of fraud and imposture." The Rickers also urged the

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33 *Wonderful Medicinal Virtues*, 33; *Poland Mineral Spring Water* (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, [1879]), 4; *Poland Mineral Spring Water* (1883), 2.
public to buy from "no person except our duly authorized agents, or directly from the Spring."\textsuperscript{29}

Agents were important members of the Poland Spring "community." From the outset of the business in 1860, Hiram Ricker relied upon J. G. Cook and Company of Lewiston, Dr. J. R. Haley of Brunswick, George R. Kimball of Portland, and a Mr. King of Saccarappa [Westbrook], Maine, to help distribute the water. Harris and Chapman provided entry into the Boston market in the same year. The two apothecaries sent bottles of the product to every physician in the city. They also invited doctors to examine depositions from patients whose ailments had been remedied by use of Poland Water.\textsuperscript{30}

By 1876 the Boston agent for Hiram Ricker and Sons was Jacob Graves and Company. Ever mindful of the product's main asset, the Rickers assured interested parties that the water available in Boston was "as fresh and pure as we can furnish it from the Spring, as we are constantly shipping to them." The following year the company dispensed with the middleman, establishing instead its own distribution center in Boston. Managed by Alonzo H. Briggs, the depot supplied agents with

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\textsuperscript{29}Poland Mineral Spring Water ([1879]), 2; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 12, 22.
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\textsuperscript{30}"Trip to Poland," Lewiston Falls Journal, 20 July 1860; Poland Spring Centennial, 81; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 8, 12-3.
\end{flushleft}
Poland Water at $7 per barrel and $5 per half barrel, a dollar mark up over the price at the spring.\textsuperscript{31}

In May of 1883 Hiram Ricker and Sons opened a second regional distribution center in New York City. Within a few years, annual sales reached $3000. By 1887, however, revenues were languishing at $1000. To rekindle interest in the water, Edward Ricker traveled to the city intending to relocate the company’s office. He chose space in the Tribune Building, a prime location for which he was willing to commit to a rental rate nearly double the revenue generated by New York sales during the preceding year. Ricker’s confidence was richly rewarded. In 1892 six people staffed the New York office and orders amounted to over $100,000. Sales continued to increase even amidst the "hard times" that followed the Depression of 1893. In 1897 annual receipts of the New York office totaled nearly $150,000.\textsuperscript{32}

From five agents in 1860, the distribution network grew to twenty-four in 1879. Two-thirds were located in New England, the remaining one-third in cities within the area bounded by New York, Washington, New Orleans and Chicago. By 1895 the network had expanded to forty-one agents, only five of whom were based in New England. Hiram Ricker and Sons was

\textsuperscript{31}Poland Mineral Spring Water (1876), 32; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 1.

\textsuperscript{32}"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8; Poland Spring Centennial, 48; "A Quarter Century at Poland Spring," Boston Daily Globe, 4 March 1897.
now a corporation with offices in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago and representatives spread from Bangor, Maine, to Los Angeles, California, and from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Jacksonville, Florida. It was also an international company with five agents in Canada and one in Bermuda. A year later Poland Water was even for sale in London. In this far-flung marketplace, the Rickers relied on agents and pamphlets to maintain their connection to customers.33

Back at Poland Spring a visitor to the hilltop in 1876 came upon the source of the water, where he found "a small building covering the crystal supply, surrounded by piles of barrels." The reporter explained that Hiram Ricker and Sons used the barrels to store the waters whose "very purity . . . made them so famous." Five coopers were kept constantly busy turning the staves purchased from local contractors into the hundreds of casks needed to send the water "to all parts of the country as well as to Europe, Cuba and other over-ocean ports." During the past year, the visitor noted, the Rickers had shipped six thousand containers of Poland Water priced at

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33Poland Mineral Spring Water (1879), inside front cover; Poland Mineral Spring Water: The Story of Its History and Its Marvellous Curative Properties (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), inside front cover; "Poland Water Leads Them All," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 16; Hill-Top, 13 September 1896, 4.

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$6 per barrel through the Hotel Road Station of the Grand Trunk Railroad.\textsuperscript{34}

The problem with barrels was that a considerable amount of water was lost in their preparation. To prevent the highly absorbent liquid from acquiring a woody taste, the casks first had to be cleaned and then soaked in the spring water. The Rickers figured that for every barrel of water put up, two more were wasted. The solution was to use glass bottles. Because of the rapid rise in demand for the water, the Rickers predicted in 1887 that they would soon have to ship it "wholly in glass."\textsuperscript{35}

Introducing this new form of packaging necessitated the enlargement of the Spring House and the addition of a thirty-by-sixty-foot barreling and bottling plant in the fall of 1876. By 1885 "business had so expanded" that an ell designed to serve as the packing department was built onto the north side of the bottling building. Improved bottling machinery, aerating equipment, and a new storage tank were added to the

\textsuperscript{34}"Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; H. Ricker Sons, South Poland, ME, Correspondence, to S. H. Chandler, New Gloucester, ME, 31 January 1885, AHS.

In an 1885 letter to S. H. Chandler of New Gloucester, Maine, Hiram Ricker and Sons inquired about purchasing between 75,000 and 100,000 whole barrel staves and 30,000 half barrel staves. The writer indicated that the prices for planed and delivered staves in the previous year had been $16 per thousand for whole barrels and $13 per thousand for half barrels.

\textsuperscript{35}Poland Spring Centennial, 51-2; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8; Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated.
facility. Made out of polished granite, the two-thousand-gallon tank measured four-feet deep, four-feet wide, and fourteen-feet long. In 1892 Hiram Ricker and Sons turned out millions of bottles of Poland Water in what a local reporter called "the largest and best equipped barreling and bottling establishments in the United States." To keep up with changing technology and increasing demand, however, the Rickers began circulating plans for a new "richly designed and costly stone house at the Spring" only three years later.36

To demonstrate the purity of the production process, an 1895 issue of the Hill-Top, another medium through which the Rickers communicated with customers, took readers on a thorough tour of the old barreling and bottling plant. It began at two tanks, each having a capacity of two thousand bottles, where the containers soaked in a strong soda ash solution for twelve hours. The bottles then moved on to a third tank where they were washed with hot water. Next the bottles proceeded to a machine that first forced steam into them and then scoured the interior with a brush rotating at 1900 revolutions per minute. The fourth step in the cleaning process was a steam bath followed by a hot water rinse.

36"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6, 8; Poland Spring Centennial, 28, 50; "Quarter Century," Boston Daily Globe, 4 March 1897.

Construction on the proposed new Spring House and bottling plant finally commenced in 1906.
Finally, wash room attendants placed the sterilized bottles on racks nose down. 37

Sent on to the filling room, the bottles received their contents of spring water directly from the large stone holding tank. As soon as this step was completed, a worker plugged the bottles with corks made from the "purest" Spanish stock and emblazoned with the Poland Mineral Spring trademark. At this point, a conveyor moved the containers to the labeling room where inspectors examined them for signs of imperfections. If a bottle passed, a worker adhered to it a green label bearing the words "Poland Water" in large, white letters. For added assurance of authenticity, a seal featuring the trademark was placed over the cork. A packer then wiped the bottle clean and placed it in a case. For six months out of the year, this work went on day and night in double shifts. In all, the Rickers employed about thirty men at the spring. 38

In 1895 the public received another look at the industrial landscape on the hilltop through the pages of Poland Spring Centennial. Once again, the emphasis was on demonstrating that the application of the latest technology preserved purity. The guidebook assured customers that "every known device for preserving the purity and sweetness of the water"

37"Poland Water," Hill-Top, 8 September 1895, 1.

38Ibid; Poland Spring Centennial, 48, 51; Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; Souvenir List of Employees (Poland Spring: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1900), unpaginated.
had been supplied. It also stated that "the greatest care [was] exercised in the bottling process to prevent the absorption of impure matters." Despite all the steps taken to maintain quality, the Rickers recognized that a less than crystal clear bottle of water was bound to turn up from time to time. They maintained, however, that "if any sediment or any impurities are discovered in any package in the consumer's hands, these must be charged to some impurity in the cork, or in the receptacle in which the water is placed." The problem could not be with the water, the Rickers reasoned, since purity was one of its "distinguishing" features."

The Rickers demonstrated their commitment to quality by constantly trying to improve the production process. By 1901 they had changed the solution in which bottles soaked to sodium bicarbonate and had doubled the time the containers soaked to twenty-four hours. They had also built a new bottling house. It contained a copper sterilizing tank and a machine, described as "almost human in its handling of the work," with the capacity to wash between twelve and fifteen thousand bottles per day. Likening their scientific and "perfectly clean" methods to the clinical operations of the modern surgeon, the Rickers doubted that "such a perfected bottling plant" existed anywhere else. The family promised that "no expense is spared to have the water reach the

"Poland Spring Centennial, 50-1."
consumer in exactly the condition it leaves the immense
formation of granite from which it flows."""0

During the busy season, four four-horse teams made as
many as two trips daily to the Lewiston Junction railroad
station. Each load contained cases filled with either twenty-
four half-gallon bottles, fifty quart bottles or one hundred
pint bottles. In 1895 teamsters also transported a weekly
average of one hundred barrels and two hundred to three
hundred carboys with a capacity of twelve to fifteen gallons.
This cargo was destined for the agents and sales offices of
Hiram Ricker and Sons, from which it would then be sent
"throughout the United States and Canada; to South America,
Cuba, England, the continent of Europe, India, [and] Egypt."
As an 1895 Hill-Top article observed, through "enterprise,
good judgement, and mental capacity," the three Ricker
brothers had turned the spring "into a fountain of health and
a mountain of wealth."""1

One measure of the success of Hiram Ricker and Sons came
from the statistics the company cited. In 1886 the Rickers
proudly noted that sales of Poland Water had risen from 20,000
gallons in 1870 to a current annual total of 340,000 gallons.
With consumption reaching the 400,000 gallon plateau in 1890,

""The Bottle and the Cork," Hill-Top, 4 August 1901, 2-3;
Poland Spring House, (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and
Sons, [1901]), unpagedinated.

"Poland Spring Centennial, 47-8; "Poland Water," Hill-
Top, 8 September 1895, 1.
the Rickers trumpeted the fact that the output of their spring doubled that of all the springs at Saratoga, New York, combined. Sales continued to increase through the rest of the decade and into the opening years of the next century. By 1906 the production of water at Poland Spring surpassed a half million gallons.42

Saratoga stood out as the standard by which the Rickers demonstrated the success of their product. Saratoga’s rise to prominence began in the 1790s. The discovery of scores of springs, accompanied by the construction of dozens of hotels, transformed the town and nearby Ballston Spa into one of the nation’s leading resort areas during the early nineteenth century. The sale of bottled water from the springs dated to 1825. By the 1850s an estimated thirty-five thousand tourists vacationed in Saratoga each season. The introduction of gambling casinos and horse racing added to the town’s popularity after the Civil War. Although the New York resort attracted many more visitors than Poland Spring, sales of Poland Water eventually surpassed those of the waters from all of Saratoga’s springs combined. As early as 1860, the Rev. Dr. Cook of Lynn, Massachusetts, had declared in the Boston

42 Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, Maine (Boston: W. A. Ferguson, 1891), 736; Mitchell and Davis, comp., The Town Register: Poland, Raymond and Casco, 1906 (Brunswick, ME: H. E. Mitchell, 1906), 24.
Recorder that "as a medicine the Poland Water was of greater value than the water of all the Springs in Saratoga."  

For many mineral water aficionados, European spas set the standard. An 1890 advertisement for Hiram Ricker and Sons pointed out, therefore, that the firm's sales surpassed not only those of "all the Springs at Saratoga combined," but also of "any other Medicinal Spring in the world." In 1894 the Hill-Top observed that Poland Spring was "rapidly gaining a national reputation as the Carlsbad of America." Three years later the paper printed the testimonial of a guest who maintained that Poland Spring provided "much better facilities" than the spas in Europe. By 1899 the Rickers claimed that "the majority of physicians all over the United States and many in the most famous European Spas recommend Poland Water as 'the purest and most valuable medicinal water known.'" While an article in the Boston Daily Globe concurred that the Rickers operated the "foremost of American Spas," it  

"John B. Bachelder, Popular Resorts, and How to Reach Them (Boston: John B. Bachelder, 1875), 176; John Hayward, A Gazetteer of the United States of America (Hartford, CT: Case, Tiffany, 1853), 670; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 11.

only conceded that Poland Spring rivaled the older mineral springs of Europe."

In 1897 the Rickers took advantage of the favorable comparison between American and European mineral waters to advocate inclusion of protective duties for domestic bottlers in the Dingley Tariff Bill. In correspondence addressed to the Senate Finance Committee, Hiram Ricker and Sons stated that "some American springs have been endorsed and recommended by the attending physicians at leading spas of Europe, as being the finest water in the world." No country, the letter added, had as good or as many springs as the United States. The problem was that many of these waters never reached consumers because American bottlers faced higher production costs than their European competitors. As a consequence, the public was exposed to "many imported carbonated waters . . . injurious to health." The Rickers wanted the committee to look beyond the "erroneous statements . . . made through the influence of those who are interested in importing water" and to see that ensuring access to pure water was an important public health issue."

"Tea Table, May 1890; Hill-Top, 26 August 1894, 3; "Obey the Laws of Health," Hill-Top, 15 August 1897, 16; "Quarter Century," Boston Daily Globe, 4 March 1897; Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, back cover.

"Hiram Ricker and Sons, South Poland, ME, Correspondence, to the Honorable Finance Committee, Washington, DC, 19 April 1897, AHS.
In spite of the economic self-interest made obvious by advocacy of protective legislation, the Rickers routinely denied suggestions that ownership of the spring enabled them to line their wallets. For Hiram Ricker, dispensing the healing water to the ill was such an important obligation that he sometimes gave it away. One beneficiary of his charity was Susan Noble, a twenty-four-year old woman whom he met in Lewiston in 1866. Noble's throat had become so swollen by scrofulous humor that she was unable to turn her head. Although she could not afford to pay for treatment, Ricker invited the woman to the spring anyway. In exchange for her labor, she was permitted to drink and bathe in the water for six weeks in July and August. When her condition flared up again the following year, Ricker invited Noble to return to the spring on the same terms.

Even when it came to paying customers, the Rickers denied having a "speculative," "mercenary," or "commercial" interest in the spring water. They dismissed money derived from the spring as an "inconsequential accident of possession." While the Rickers did not dispute that they wished "to prosper, to thrive, to extend our business," they insisted they had been

"Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 24-5, 36-7; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 20-2.

Noble was not the only person touched by Hiram Ricker's generosity. When money became tight in 1876 for Olive Martin of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Ricker gave the sufferer of Bright's disease a complimentary barrel of water to take home.
"lifted above the plane of selfishness." A "worthy and generous impulse" in their hearts, the Rickers maintained, motivated them "to spread the knowledge of what this water will do for suffering humanity, for the sake of humanity." Time and again, the family used modern media to promote the antimodern image of the good neighbor and illusion of customary economic relations."

"Wonderful Medicinal Virtues"

The third cornerstone of Poland Water was the promotion of its "wonderful medicinal virtues." The Rickers used periodical ads and published pamphlets to proclaim the healthfulness of pure water as vigorously as they disclaimed its profitability. To them it was "evident that the health of the body depends in a large measure upon the purity of the water that is drank by each individual." Poland Water's "perfect purity," thus, made it a valuable medical agent. It served as a counteracting medicine for invalids, a tonic and restorative for convalescents, and a preventative for the healthy."

Highlighting the water's medicinal use, instructions in the pamphlets directed patients to drink it at prescribed times throughout the day: before breakfast, at 10 AM, before

"Poland Mineral Spring Water (1891), 11; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6; Poland Spring Centennial, 39-41; Poland Spring Water, unpaginated.

"Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 70-2.
dinner, at 3 PM, before teatime, and before bedtime. Teatime was a curious designation since the beverage was one the Rickers specifically warned people to avoid. Also banned were wine, cider, vinegar, liquors, and coffee. In their place, the Rickers advised the daily consumption of at least four to ten glasses of water, served no colder than forty-five to forty-eight degrees. Customers were challenged, however, to break the record of Poland Spring's champion water drinker, George Innis of San Francisco. During the 1893 season, Innis downed forty glasses of water in a twenty-four hour period."

The Rickers were quite specific and confident about the maladies their prescribed water regimen could remedy. One of the first ads placed by Hiram Ricker, a circular in an 1860 issue of the Brunswick (Maine) Record, identified Poland Mineral Water as a cure for liver and kidney complaints, dyspepsia, and gravel. It also described the water as a blood purifier. Anyone requiring proof was invited to contact Dr. Haley, the local agent, or to "visit the Spring and use the water." A postscript notified prospective visitors that they could obtain board at the site for a fee ranging from $2.50 to $3.50 per week.

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"Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 18, 33; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 41; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1891), 82; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 9.

"Poland Spring: The Early History of this Wonderful Spring Its Growth and Development Illustrated (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1914), unpaginated; Poland Spring Centennial, 81.
Instead of calling it advertising, the Rickers preferred to describe what they were doing as submitting commendations about the water's "healing virtues" to the public's consideration. In part, they substantiated their claims that Poland Water was a "sure cure" for kidney disease, bladder stones, dyspepsia, liver complaint, dropsy, salt rheum, scrofula humor, loss of appetite, general debility, incipient indigestion, constipation, and diseases of the urinary organs by providing scores of testimonials. Using correspondence from satisfied customers had several advantages. First, it made more personal the "curative virtues" of the "great and valuable remedy." Commendations came from "persons in all conditions of life, of the highest respectability." Second, it fostered a sense of community among customers. The public was introduced to new "neighbors," ranging from one of the Ricker's own, Elder Otis Sawyer of the Sabbathday Lake Shaker village, who hailed the product as "the Water of Life flowing from the fountain of the Lord," to prominent members of the national community such as Secretary of State James G. Blaine and former President Ulysses S. Grant, who would drink no other water. Finally, testimonials were perceived as being "true as truth." Readers skeptical of the authenticity of the letters they saw in the water pamphlets were welcome to view
the original testimonials which were kept in a book available at the office counter in the Poland Spring House.\textsuperscript{51}

One of the most prized endorsements came from one of the first patients cured by the spring water, Ezekiel C. Jackson. The cattle driver from Norway, Maine, had been troubled by kidney stones for many years when Hiram Ricker paid him a visit in 1859. Ricker wanted to conduct an experiment on one of the 503 pieces of gravel that surgeon John C. Warren of Boston had removed from Jackson in 1853. Ricker placed a specimen in a vial of the spring water and observed that it dissolved almost instantaneously. Additional tests with other fragments produced similar results.\textsuperscript{52}

When Jackson's affliction flared up again in January of 1860, he showed up at Poland Spring vowing with tears in his eyes never to be operated on again. Hiram Ricker comforted his friend and sent him home with a supply of water. According to an affidavit supplied by Jackson, he "experienced immediate relief, and within four weeks was entirely cured." Three decades later, the Rickers published the handwritten testimonial, along with a typescript copy, in a water pamphlet. They also had the pleasure of extending a "genuine, hearty welcome" to Jackson on August 14, 1897, when he made his first visit to Poland Spring in a quarter of a century.

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Wonderful Medicinal Virtues}, 1, 33; \textit{Poland Mineral Spring Water} (1883), 54; \textit{Poland Spring Water}, unpaginated; "An Interesting Visitor," \textit{Hill-Top}, 22 August 1897, 7.

\textsuperscript{52}[Ricker], "Poland Spring," 7, 11-2.
Jackson reported that in the thirty-seven years since he had first tried the water, his troubles with kidney stones had never returned.53

One of the most prestigious testimonials was sent by James Blaine on September 6, 1881. The Maine native had been using Poland Water for two decades and regarded it as "possessing high value" in the treatment of rheumatism and indigestion. In his telegram, the Secretary of State urgently requested the shipment of two more cases of the product to President James Garfield at Long Branch, New Jersey. Garfield had been mortally wounded two months earlier by an assassin's bullet and, according to Blaine, would "drink no other water." "Would Drink No Other Water" was also the headline under which the Rickers ran a one-sentence order for a barrel of water sent by General Grant from Mt. McGregor, New York, in June of 1885.54

Even as testimonials extolled the medicinal virtues of the water, they subtly indicted the medical profession. Doctors were criticized for being expensive, ineffective,

53Ibid., 12; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1891), 41; Poland Spring (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, [1893]), 41; Hill-Top, 22 August 1897, 7.

54Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 36-7; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1891), 50.

Suffering from throat cancer, Grant had gone to the summer home of Philadelphia industrialist Joseph W. Drexel to write his memoirs. Ironically, Poland Water saved neither President. In fact, Garfield and Grant both died a few weeks after each message was sent. This did not prevent the Rickers from including them in pamphlets for many years to come.
misinformed, and wrong. In 1884 Hiram Ricker recounted over twenty cases in which conventional medicine had failed patients. Nathan Miller, for example, had despaired that doctors could do anything for him after five months of treatment. Ezekiel Jackson had not been cured by his operation. The Rev. Cook had charged that doctors "humbugged" him. Susan Noble had visited fifteen physicians to no avail. Olive Martin had been told by the ablest doctors in Boston that nothing could be done for her. A Maine sea captain by the name of Brooks had spent $650 at a Boston hospital without receiving any relief. Hiram Ricker, in contrast, had cured Captain Brooks's case of dropsy in less than three weeks and for under $20. The point made through the testimonials was clear. Patients should turn to Poland Water and abandon the "nauseating pills, powders and potions" prescribed by physicians."

The Rickers had to be careful that criticism of the medical profession did not go too far, since many people preferred to put their trust in trained professionals rather than their faith in folk healers. As Donna J. Wood has indicated in her study of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, "raw empiricism was on the way out," so, too, was "knowledge based on faith." In their place, a scientific epistemology gained ascendance. This "alternative way of knowing" was

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"[Ricker], "Poland Spring," 5, 11, 37-40; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 22; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 18.
based upon standardized procedures, logical argument, and replicable evidence. 

Hiram Ricker's decision to seek the approval of Dr. Eliphalet Clark back in 1859 during the formative stages of the water business suggests that he recognized the generally respected status of the profession. The Rickers did make a distinction between "true" and "scientific" physicians. The former were acceptable because they recognized the "vital and physical elements of man" and enlisted in behalf of patients "all the powers of external nature as well as the quickening influences of faith and hope." The latter were unacceptable because they treated "the human body as if it were so much brute matter, to be subjected to analytical and synthetical reagents for the purpose of evolving definite results." 

Early pamphlets made sparing use of testimonials from doctors of either classification. The 1876 and 1877 editions each included only two letters from doctors out of a combined total of fifty-one. By 1883, however, the profession merited a list of forty-two physicians in Maine, Boston, and New York City who were willing to recommend the "beneficial effects" of Poland Water. In contrast to the detailed, often emotional, recovery narratives written by patients, the testimonials of doctors tended to be terse statements identifying specific maladies alleviated by use of the water. Boston physician R.

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56 Wood, Strategic Uses, 189.
57 Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 16.
W. Newell, for instance, needed only six lines in an 1872 letter to recommend the water for those afflicted with dyspepsia or urinary diseases. It took Dr. George McLellan of Philadelphia longer to prescribe use of the remedy in all cases of nervous derangement. His 1883 letter required nine lines because he felt compelled to explain that the water's "remarkable purity" outweighed his aversion to giving testimonials."n

Probably the most avid medical promoter of Poland Water was the resort's resident physician, Dr. Milton Wedgwood. After careful investigation of claims made for the water, he wrote a testimonial in 1879 asserting that its purity and curative properties had been established beyond doubt. Wedgwood declared the water useful for all forms of dyspepsia and kidney disease. Later he expanded the scope of his recommendation in "Diseases of the Urinary Organs," a four-page paper published in the 1883 water pamphlet. Based upon his work with patients at the resort, Wedgwood was confident that drinking the water would give "a new lease of life" to sufferers of kidney and bladder diseases, benefit people afflicted with rheumatic or scarlet fever, and save mothers from the "evil" results of the "frightful" complications of pregnancy."

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"Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 23; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 29; Poland Spring House (1887), unpaginated.

"Poland Mineral Spring Water (1879), 12; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 24-7."
Wedgwood's interest in Poland Water also grew out of his membership on the Maine State Board of Health. The legislature created the board in 1885, granting it the authority to study and investigate, although not regulate, public health issues. In its second annual report, the board warned that "spring water is not necessarily pure." Consequently, the Board declared in 1888 the protection of drinking water supplies one of the more important duties of public health officers.60

A decade later, the board plunged into the national debate over a proposed pure food and drug bill, deeming "it its duty, in the interest of the health of the people and of public economy, to use its influence for the support of the measure." With these obligations in mind, Doctors Wedgwood, Young, and Wallace K. Oakes; Edward Jordan; and the four other members of the Board of Health made an official visit to Poland Spring on June 27, 1897. During its three day stay, the delegation fanned out to inspect the facilities. Marcia B. Jordan, the wife of Edward Jordan, reported in the Hill-Top that "it is very certain that the officers of the board carried away delightful impressions of the health, exquisite

cleanliness, and fine appointments of this peerless summer resort."  

The board made another inspection of entire premises in 1899. The sanitary improvements made during the intervening two years impressed Dr. Oakes. The Rickers had installed a new scientific plumbing system in the Poland Spring House and improved the sterilization process at the bottling plant. Every bottle was now rinsed in an alkaline solution, washed with a rubber plunger, and sterilized with steam heated to 250 degrees. In Oakes’s estimation, use of a sterile bottle and a perfect cork made it impossible for contaminating germs to pollute the pure water. Pronouncing board members "thoroughly satisfied" with the inspection, Oakes commented that the "delightful summer home" was as safe as it was beautiful.  

To certify the safety and purity of Poland Water, the Rickers called upon the expertise of chemists, although somewhat reluctantly. Published analyses supplemented customary testimonials by providing information customers needed in order to behave instrumentally in the modern marketplace. Chemists not only identified the quantities of minerals in the water; more importantly, they established "the purity and excellence, as well as the medicinal qualities" of the product. In sharing these reports with the public, the

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62 Hill-Top, 9 July 1899, 16.
Rickers specifically appealed to "an instinctive curiosity, common to everybody, to 'know what the water contains'."\(^6\)

In the early 1870s, the Rickers had H. T. Cummings and S. Dana Hayes, Assayers for the States of Maine and Massachusetts respectively, test Poland Water. On the basis of "a careful qualitative examination," Cummings judged the product "a most wholesome and delicious drinking water." Hayes reported in 1873 that one gallon of the liquid contained a little over four grains of nine minerals. He identified alkalinity, aeration, and above all else, purity as the water's three main characteristics. Hayes concluded that "this water having been extensively used for medicinal purposes for ten or fifteen years, does not require any further comments from the analytical chemist, other than to classify it as a water of great purity."\(^6\)

In spite of Hayes's confidence in the water, the Rickers had it subjected to further tests. In 1875 one of the leading activists in the pure food movement, Dr. Charles F. Chandler of Columbia College in New York, confirmed that the mineral composition was about four grains per gallon. Two years later

\(^6\)Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 6; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 21.

\(^6\)Poland Mineral Spring Water (1876), 5-7; Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 6.

Poland Water has a very low mineral content of forty-six milligrams per liter. Water with a high mineral content has in excess of one thousand milligrams per liter. See Maureen and Timothy Green, The Best Bottled Waters in the World (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 140-1.
Prof. Howard Stevens and C. M. Wilkins of the United States Mint in Philadelphia duplicated Chandler's results. So, too, did the "complete and exhaustive analysis" conducted by Maine State Chemist Frank L. Bartlett. In the early 1890s, both Chandler and Bartlett recertified their earlier reports for Hiram Ricker and Sons. "Closely in accord" with these findings was the analysis of A. A. Breneman, a former chemistry professor at Cornell. In December of 1894, he commended "not only the great purity of Poland Water, but its constancy of composition during long periods."5

Breneman's familiarity with the product dated back at least a year earlier when he had served as a judge of the mineral spring waters exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Hiram Ricker and Sons had an elaborate twenty-five-by-forty-five foot booth on the first floor of the Agricultural Building. There they displayed bottles of Poland Water, as well as "fine paintings and scenic views of their famous springs and grounds" that "added very materially to the decorative appearance." Breneman awarded the product a medal, citing it as a "water of great purity" and a "valuable medicinal agent." Claiming that their water was the only one

65 "Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 5-6, 31; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1879), 8; Poland Spring (1893), 11; Poland Spring: The Early History of this Wonderful Spring Its Growth and Development Illustrated (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1908), unpaginated.

For more on the career of Charles Chandler, see Okun, Fair Play, 41-74.
out of the hundreds from throughout the world honored on both counts, the Rickers launched a new advertising campaign in 1895. Entitled "Poland Water Leads Them All," it pointed to the product's effectiveness as an eliminator of bladder and kidney ailments, superior sales compared to the waters of Saratoga Springs, and exposition award as evidence of past success and future promise."

Despite the regular inclusion of chemical analyses in pamphlets, the Rickers were ambivalent about their utility. While they established the purity and supported the efficacy of the water, they also facilitated deception and failed to explain the water's "secret." In an 1883 pamphlet, the Rickers admitted they placed "no particular stress on our published analyses." They complained that "published analyses have indeed done injury; for they have induced parties to announce other springs, located in different sections of the country, as possessing 'all the qualities of the POLAND SPRING WATER.'" The problem had become so common that hundreds of people had urged the company to do something about it. The Rickers responded that they could do little "except to make known, as far as we are able, our claims for the genuine POLAND WATER." The best the company could do in the modern

"Poland Spring Centennial, 53-5; Report of the Board of World's Fair Managers of Maine (Augusta, ME: Burleigh & Flynt, 1895), 16; "Poland Water Leads Them All," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 16; "Leads Them All!" Hill-Top, 1896, back cover.
marketplace was provide customers with accurate information and hope they put it to good use.\textsuperscript{67}

To prevent readers from being seduced by the presumed authority of scientists, the 1883 pamphlet repeatedly reminded readers of the limitations of science. The Rickers made it clear that instead of "any preconceived theories or arbitrary assumptions of chemists," the empirical evidence attested to by "thousands of intelligent persons scattered all over this broad land" served as the basis for their therapeutic claims. While chemists could identify the mineral constituents of the water, they could not "account for its almost miraculous curative properties." This secret remained "with the Creator of all things." As far as the Rickers were concerned, testimonials stating that the water healed were sufficient; knowing how or why it worked was irrelevant.\textsuperscript{68}

In an 1890 pamphlet, the Rickers again took a dim view of the "light of science." The text ridiculed modern science for being "intensely egotistical." Chemistry was dismissed as a discipline only able to "tell much that there is; so much of this and so much of that, but, when it has made its formula of substances, it is no nearer the secret of the healing than before." When a chemist tried to explain the unique purity and absorbent quality of the water, he stood in "bewilderment." His analysis was "powerless to detect" these and other

\textsuperscript{67}Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 22.
\textsuperscript{68}Ibid., 18-9.
mysteries of nature. "Not a man living," the pamphlet maintained, could "tell why this Poland Water has done for them what it has done." A decade later, the Rickers acknowledged "strained" relations with the medical and chemical professions because of the family's insistence that knowledge of the water's power had come by divine revelation, not scientific analysis."

One scientist who agreed with the Rickers about the limitations of his discipline was Frank Bartlett. In 1892 the former Maine State Chemist confided: "I have always believed that there is more in the combination of the Poland Water, or, I may say, in its physical properties, than people have been inclined to allow." He recognized that chemical analyses could only identify elements; it could not tell how or why they combined. Bartlett ended his letter with the observation that some things "'surpasseth man's understanding.'"

"This Great Gift of God"

As Bartlett's commentary suggests, religious sentiment was the final cornerstone upon which the Rickers built their spring water empire. Since purity was fundamentally a moral issue for Gilded-Age Americans, Hiram Ricker and Sons often used religious language and symbols to promote Poland Water.

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"Poland Spring Water," unpaginated; Poland Spring Hotel (1901), unpaginated.

"Poland Spring" [1893], 14.
The moral dimension of the search for purity held out the promise of fulfilling the spiritual needs of modern man in addition to healing the physical maladies associated with modern life. A verse from "A Drinking Song," an 1895 poem about the "purest" water of Poland Spring, expressed this belief lyrically:

The inner man will be refreshed;
The eye will find relief;
And as I quaff from the carafe,
Shall down all cares and grief.\(^7\)\(^1\)

The carafe mentioned in the poem was a triangular-shaped, glass decanter designed by Nettie Ricker. The three sides depicted images of the Mansion House, Poland Spring House, and Spring House. The stopper was formed in the shape of a cow's head and was meant to represent the first beneficiaries of the water following the Rickers' removal to the hilltop in the late eighteenth century. The proprietors of the resort encouraged guests to take a carafe home in order to "remind them of the place the water comes from, the rock-riven crystal fountain of health, pure and eternal."\(^7\)\(^2\)

Before the introduction of the carafe, the Rickers chose as one of their first bottle designs a twelve-inch tall, quart container shaped in the form of a bearded man wearing a robe.

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\(^7\)\(^1\) "A Drinking Song," *Hill-Top*, 28 July 1895, 3.

Produced by Salem Glass Works of Salem, New Jersey, the "Moses" bottle honored the prophet who "in Biblical history, 'smote the rock and the waters gushed forth.'" Jane Patterson expanded upon the symbolism of the container in The Romance of the New Bethesda. In her fictional account of summers at Poland Spring, Dr. Rossville, the character based upon Hiram Ricker, responded to an inquiry about the meaning of the bottle with the statement:

No man can bring water out of a rock without help. It is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes. It was marvellous then, and a good deal more so now.

Besides their common marvelous origins, the sacred pools of pure water found at Horeb and Poland Spring were also linked by miraculous powers. Patterson wrote that like the Bethesda of biblical times, "the New Bethesda heals the sick, and restores the lame, and makes the blind to see."

Hiram Ricker turned the missionary symbolism into a role for himself. He prophesied the future; he ministered to the faithless; and he restored the lame and healed the sick. To look the part of prophet, Hiram grew shoulder-length, mutton-chop side whiskers. Two of his three sons also grew long flowing beards, leading to speculation that one of them had posed for the design of the Moses bottle. The two noteworthy

predictions Ricker made during his tenure as patriarch of Poland Spring were that the water would become known throughout the world and that the spring would eventually be exhausted."

From 1859 until his death in 1893, Hiram Ricker worked to make sure that at least the first of his prophecies came true. According to an 1876 newspaper article, Ricker's ability to discourse nobly on the virtues of the water attracted pale and emaciated invalids and "lean, lank and cadaverous persons" to Poland Spring. The account credited his ministrations with "redeeming from the thraldom of disease" the rich and poor, as well as the high and low. The reporter was so swept up by Hiram's evangelism he speculated that the apostle Paul would have advised Timothy to drink pure Poland Water instead of wine to relieve his infirmities if only it had been available."

Another article attributed Ricker's success to a faith that "lent faith to others." The journalist explained that as a result, "the book of life is full of testimonials from invalids whom Hiram Ricker, Sr., induced to drink of the spring." One of those invalids was a gentleman whom Ricker remembered meeting in 1862. Because of a sore on his ankle, the man had been reduced to hobbling around with crutch and

"Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876.

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"Vincent, Moses Bottle, 13; Poland Spring Centennial, 47.

"Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876.

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cane. Ricker recalled that after drinking and bathing in Poland Water for three weeks, the patient was instructed to throw away his cane. To the man's great joy, he found that he could walk unassisted for the first time in three years. Ricker recounted a similar story about a Mr. Smith from Charlestown, Massachusetts, who was able to hang up his cane in 1876 after drinking the water for six days.\footnote{Ricker, "Poland Spring," 17–8, 35–6.}

The 1877 water pamphlet included several testimonials to the growing faith in the virtues of Poland Water. Drinking it had enabled Samuel A. Parker to renovate his whole system, Henry C. Thiemann to cure his case of kidney stones, and Job Prince to relieve his urinary troubles. In addition, Moses E. Osgood was convinced that his life had been saved from the ravages of acute Bright's disease by the use of Poland Water under God's direction.\footnote{Wonderful Medicinal Virtues, 10, 24–8.}

Another convert to the faith was Mrs. Webster Teel. For five years, her daughter's health had been deteriorating. Hoping to rid the eleven-year-old girl of the pain associated with bladder and kidney ailments, Mrs. Teel finally decided to buy a barrel of the water in 1876, even though she "did not have an atom of faith" in it. Within ten weeks the "pure, life-giving water" had cured Lula Teel. Her grateful mother

\footnote{"After a Long Life," Lewiston Evening Journal, 6 June 1893, 7; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 17–8, 35–6.}
urged "every one suffering from any of these terrible diseases . . . to try this great gift of God to man." 78

When the Rev. A. J. Patterson was introduced to the water in August of 1873, he, too, shared Mrs. Teel's initial skepticism. The minister suffered from inflammation of the kidneys. His condition had degenerated to the point that Dr. Bowditch, one of the leading physicians in Boston, advised him to retire. Dejected, Patterson traveled to Poland Spring expecting to find rest, not relief. He dismissed Hiram Ricker's claims about the water as those of "an interested advocate." When Ricker told him to drink three pints in three hours, Patterson was certain the proprietor of the resort "must be a subject almost ready for an insane asylum." Nevertheless, he obeyed, deciding it would be better to die "from an over-drink of pure water" than from kidney disease. When the deadline set by Ricker arrived, the minister noticed that "the obstructions were at once entirely and permanently removed" for the first time in eight months. In a testimonial written ten years later, Patterson referred to the work of Providence that had prolonged his life as "little short of a miracle." 79

T. S. Quinn considered the cure of his bout with kidney disease to have been "miraculous" as well. The testimonial of

78 Ibid., 15-7.
79 Ibid., 30; Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 44-6; [Ricker], "Poland Spring," 33.
the Brooklyn, New York, lumber exporter began in 1888 when he set out on a world tour in search of relief from his painful disorder. Quinn's destination was the spa at Carlsbad, Germany, but he only made it as far as London, England. After consulting there with Sir Henry Thompson, a world-renowned specialist on urethral troubles, Quinn returned to America with little hope of recovery. For five weeks, he wasted away. His condition drove him into fits of crying and hysteria. Barring a miracle, Quinn was certain his "account with this world must soon be rendered." His physician's only remaining suggestion was to go to Poland Spring.

Two days into his stay at the resort, Quinn met Hiram Ricker. The proprietor instructed the self-described "disciple to physics and doctors" to throw away his drugs and to drink "the crystal waters that flow from Poland's fountain of health." At first, Quinn refused to heed this "sacrilegious" advice. When better judgment prevailed, the patient obeyed with "religious care and devotion." Thereafter, Quinn's health improved daily. He regained forty-eight pounds, a pussy deposit grew smaller and smaller, and his urine returned to its natural color. After three months, Quinn was able to return home to Brooklyn with his "ill maladies and woes" washed away by Poland Spring's elixir.

"Poland Spring Water," unpaginated; "Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8.

"Ibid."
Like the testimonials written by customers, the advertising produced by Hiram Ricker and Sons also made extensive use of a religious vocabulary to describe Poland Water. The 1890 pamphlet, for example, referred to the product as a "gift of God." The "miraculous" water was credited with reviving dead organs, restoring health and strength, delivering mankind from "the aches that torture, and the ills which destroy," and saving the public from "pain and death."

Fifty-seven years and one day after the Lewiston Falls Journal hailed the "great purity" of Poland Water, the Maine Medical Association honored the Rickers' "ministry of pure water." The organization presented the family with what was described as the "perfect tribute," a bronze plaque showing in bas relief an Indian kneeling beside a wilderness spring. The Hill-Top explained that the image symbolized "the complete harmony of modern medical science and work done by this pure and potable spring water toward the physical betterment of the world." Walter Graham, the editor of the Hill-Top, added that "for more than a century the water of a clear Maine spring has been performing its silent ministry of refreshment and healing throughout the world."

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"Poland Spring Water, unpaginated.

While the quantity of the promotional literature distributed by Hiram Ricker and Sons between 1860 and 1900 calls into question the claim for the silence of the ministry, the catalogs do resoundingly confirm that the company preached the refreshing and healing virtues of the water's purity. As the Rickers developed the water business between 1860 and 1900, they traced the source of its purity back to a timeless geological past. They followed its course from ancient to modern times. They assured customers that their responsible stewardship and scrupulous business practices protected the purity of the water. They offered abundant scientific evidence and personal testimonies verifying the medicinal value of the water. Finally, the Rickers' ministry asked the faithful to believe that using the pure water could cleanse the impurities of modern life from the inner self.
CHAPTER VI

THE FARM: "LOVELY PASTORAL COUNTRY"

Another alluring landscape of vivid contrasts was the "lovely pastoral country" that surrounded the hilltop. Viewing it from the veranda of the Poland Spring House or a carriage on a break ride, reading about it in the Hill-Top or a popular novel, or seeing it in landscape paintings recalled for many patrons of the resort memories of the rural past. Under the sway of nostalgia, they linked the landscape lying before them with an agrarian golden age when Americans had presumably been closer to nature and thus, inherently more virtuous. While at first appearances replete with antimodern associations to nature and nostalgia, the late-nineteenth-century agricultural landscape in Maine was in reality more influenced by the imperatives of modern commerce. At Poland Spring the tug of vivid contrasts produced an agricultural middle landscape where visitors could vicariously experience country life in a setting of urbane leisure.¹

¹Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir (S. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 71.

"A Very Fine Farming Region"

From a vantage point atop White Oak Hill in the town of Poland, the reporter for the Lewiston Falls Journal observed in July of 1860 that "a very fine farming region" spread out before him. It was beginning to wilt, however, as the result of a yearlong drought. Perhaps, as agricultural experts warned, the lack of precipitation was related to the shrinking pine forests, which, the writer explained, had "succumbed to the rapacity of the speculator and the woodman's axe" during the first half of the nineteenth century. Whatever the cause, local farmers noted with concern that the hay crop was not half as large as the year before. Although they remained green and promising, corn stalks and potato plants also thirsted for a good soaking rain. Only the apple trees "loaded with fruit" appeared to be weathering the prolonged dry spell unscathed.

On his way to Poland Spring, the journalist visited the "fine" farm of Daniel P. Atwood, an energetic republican who

Marx has explored the transformation from sentimental to complex pastoralism as industrialization introduced the machine into the garden during the nineteenth century. Burns has analyzed the cultural meanings of rural stereotypes that incorporated the themes of either pastoralism, defined as nostalgia for rural simplicity, or agrarianism, defined as the association of agriculture with the good life. She has concluded that these pastoral symbols masked truths, proffered illusions, and pretended to resolve tensions by ignoring them.

was busily bringing in what hay there was. He also toured for several hours the building and grounds of the Sabbathday Lake Shakers. When he finally reached the Ricker farmstead, the reporter found a "large house and still larger barns, speaking of the 'good old times' when large crops were garnered in."

Amidst the drought, he also found a farmer awash with water who had big plans for the future. Hiram Ricker, ever the seeker of wealth, was already dreaming in 1860 of bringing back the heydays of yesteryear by cultivating a new crop on the thirty acre field where his mineral spring flowed -- tourists. Where cattle now grazed, he envisioned building a hotel.\(^3\)

Over the next four decades, Poland remained primarily a farming region, but one dramatically reshaped by the rise of tourism. The tourist industry offered an alternative livelihood for the Rickers who turned their farmstead into a resort, as well as a quick source of cash for families such as the Pulsifers, Strouts, Stanton, Thurlow, and Judkins who sold their property to vacationers. Many other families benefitted by welcoming summer guests into their farmhouses. For those people who continued to raise livestock and grow fruits and vegetables, tourism provided many opportunities to supplement their income. Almost all the farmers in town profited from

\(^3\)"Trip to Poland," Lewiston Falls Journal, 20 July 1860; "Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 204-5, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME.
either the direct sale of produce to Poland Spring or the indirect sale to tourists through commercial enterprises such as the Poland Dairy Association.4

Most contemporary analysts agreed that the consolidation of farms and commercialization of farm products taking place in Poland and throughout rural New England during the closing decades of the nineteenth century was the proper course for modern agriculture. They advised farmers to think of agriculture as a business concerned with profit and loss, as well as a way of life concerned with feeding people and fostering virtue. Beginning with the first state agricultural report in 1856 and continuing throughout the remainder of the century, experts routinely called upon Maine farmers to operate in a more businesslike manner. An essay in the 1888 annual report, for example, identified cooperation as "the modern system of business" and chastised the agricultural industry for being

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4 H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland: Illustrated Embracing a Period of Over a Century (Mechanic Falls, ME: Poole Brothers, 1890), 120; Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, Maine (Boston, MA: W. A. Ferguson, 1891), 726, 734.

the only one to cling to the principle of individualism, rather than following "the progressive idea of the times."  

Promoters of the principle of cooperation faced substantial cultural barriers in a region where farmers had been raised to value their independence. Resistance began to erode in the wake of a depression in farm prices after the Civil War. During the 1870s, many Maine farmers became more receptive to calls by the State Board of Agriculture for experiments in associated dairying and to the appeals of the fledgling Grange movement for economic reform.®

The first cooperative established in Poland was the Mechanic Falls Dairying Association which opened a cheese factory in 1873. During the first year of operation, Superintendent George A. Robinson oversaw the production of over 45,000 pounds of cheese made from almost 390,000 pounds of milk produced by three hundred cows. The venture went out of


Day, Farming in Maine, 36, 47-8, 184-7; Fifteenth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Maine Board of Agriculture, 1870, 334.
business, however, after only a few years. The association may have met its demise because too many local dairy farmers chose to sell their milk in Portland, an option made possible by the proximity of the Grand Trunk Railroad. The cooperative needed the participation of a high percentage of area farmers in order to remain viable. The three hundred cows that supplied the cheese factory probably comprised about a third of the total in Poland in 1873.7

The Patrons of Husbandry also encountered difficulty establishing the principle of cooperation in Poland. Two chapters of the group were organized in the town in 1874. In March families around Harris Hill came together to form the Excelsior Grange. Two months later, thirty-two people in West Poland started the Lake Grange. Meetings served as forums for the exchange of ideas and promotion of fellowship. Less well received were the group’s cooperative economic goals, which for a time, "met with violent opposition." Arrangements made with contract traders to sell Grange members supplies at reduced prices did not work out; neither did cooperative purchases. In 1895 the Lake Grange voted to abandon the

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7 Eighteenth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Maine Board of Agriculture (Augusta: Sprague, Owen and Nash, 1873), 408; H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 84; Agriculture of Maine (Augusta: Burleigh and Flynt, 1888), 32; E. F. Sanford and W. P. Everts, Atlas and History of Androscoggin County Maine (Philadelphia: Sanford Everts, 1873), 4, 114; Day, Farming in Maine, 51.

According to Day, cooperatives needed to be supplied by a minimum of two hundred cows to have a chance at success.
practice and to refund money in the trading account to members. More popular with local Grangers was the life insurance provided by the Patron's Mutual Aid Society. Begun in 1875, the society numbered forty-five members fifteen years later. In spite of the limited economic achievements of the Patrons of Husbandry, Henry and George Poole still judged the social, moral, and intellectual influence of the organization to have been of "vital importance to the prosperity and well-being" of Poland."

In contrast to the failures of the dairy association and purchasing cooperatives, the privately financed Poland Packing Company established in 1873 was a success. Knowing that the climate of western Maine was ideal for growing sweet corn described as being of "unequalled fitness for canning and preservation," Portland businessman J. Winslow Jones proposed to operate a cannery if a local syndicate would construct the facility. A factory was built and aided by the addition of labor-saving machinery, the business grew steadily in spite of financial difficulties experienced by Jones. By 1890 the "model canning establishment" packaged the produce harvested from 240 acres of corn and 14 acres of beans. It had the capacity to turn out 25,000 cans per day. In the same year, John Hanscom, a businessman from Brooklyn, New York, who had

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"H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 63, 114; Mary E. Bennett, ed., Poland: Past and Present, 1795-1970 ([Poland, ME]: Poland Anniversary Committee, 1970), 84-7.
grown up in Poland and now summered on White Oak Hill, purchased the firm.'

Poland Packing was so successful that in 1886 the company's bookkeeper, Bert M. Fernald, borrowed one thousand dollars from his aunt and started his own canning business. At the time, Fernald was one of the leading farmers in Poland. Only eight years earlier, Fernald had been a school teacher. Then in 1878 at the age of twenty, he took over the family farm that had fallen on hard times following his father's death in 1875. From these humble beginnings, the younger Fernald gradually developed one of the best Holstein dairy herds in the state. Admirers more familiar with the image than the reality of "Down East" agriculture praised the ambition and perseverance that enabled Fernald to turn a "rocky farm" with sterile soil into a "very good farm" with "a more prosperous appearance." His success earned him leadership in the local Grange. Most recently, he had served on the committee charged with supervising the construction of a meeting hall for the Lake Grange.10

Fernald decided to branch out into corn packing after his wife's brothers, Charles L. and Harry A. Keene, returned from travels to the West convinced that there was a large untapped

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10Bennett, ed., Poland, 87, 90-2; Arthur G. Staples, The Inner Man ([Lewiston, ME]: Privately printed, 1923), 11, 13.
market for canned goods. The trio built its factory in West Poland near Tripp Pond. Fire, however, destroyed the structure. A rebuilt facility containing the most modern technology available opened in 1888. Three years later, the company was ready to expand. With financial backing from Frank D. True, a wholesale grocer from Portland who was also a Poland native, the partners improved the West Poland plant and added new canning factories at Bryant's Pond and Oxford, Maine. In 1892 sales totaled $15,000. By 1895 Fernald, Keene and True was the third largest canning establishment in the state. The firm shipped orders solicited by its salesman, Bert Fernald, to grocers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and even as far away as San Francisco.11

Eventually, Fernald, Keene and True operated seven factories with a combined capacity of 500,000 cans per day. As for Fernald, he pursued a career in politics during which he served as a representative in both the Maine State House and Senate, Governor of Maine from 1909 to 1911, and United States Senator from 1916 until his death in 1926.

The Rickers were widely regarded as being the power behind Fernald. William R. Pattangall, a contemporary political pundit, explained the relationship this way:

Bert M. Fernald was born in West Poland in 1858; he still lives in West Poland. West Poland is in the town of Poland. Poland Spring is in the town of Poland. The Rickers run Poland Spring. Thus you have the origin of Bert M. Fernald fairly accounted for.

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11Bennett, ed., Poland, 44, 65, 90, 92; H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 73; Alvan B. Ricker, Bert M. Fernald and Hiram W. Ricker, Poland Centennial (Poland, ME: Ricker, Fernald & Ricker, 1896), 106, 111-2; Mitchell and Davis, comp., The Town Register: Poland, Raymond and Casco, 1906 (Brunswick, ME: H. E. Mitchell, 1906), 21.
Before they entered into the canning business, Fernald and the Keene brothers helped organize a new dairy cooperative in 1884. The eight-member Poland Dairy Association united the interests of farmers with those of mill owner John S. Briggs. Briggs, who served as president of the cooperative, had installed butter making equipment in the lower floor of his steam mill at Poland Corner. From the cream produced by local dairy herds, Superintendent J. W. Mitchell manufactured an average of three hundred pounds of butter per day. Production capacity more than tripled in 1899 when the dairy moved to a new location in Poland Corner. At this time, twelve hundred cows, which, the Hill-Top pointed out in a swipe at contemporary labor unrest, never thought of holidays, unions, walking delegates, or strikes, supplied the facility. From an "ocean" of golden cream, the factory turned out up to a half ton of butter of "immaculate purity" each day.12

One of the major suppliers to the Poland Dairy Association was the Sabbathday Lake Shaker community. Two years

An early indication of the alliance was the fact that Fernald coauthored Poland Centennial with Alvan and Hiram W. Ricker.

For more on the connection between Fernald and the Rickers, see Bennett, ed., Poland, 65, 90; [Staples], Inner Man, 11; Christopher S. Beach, "Conservation and Legal Politics: The Struggle for Public Water Power in Maine, 1900-1923," Maine Historical Society Quarterly 32 (Winter, Spring 1993): 153-8.

12Agriculture of Maine (1888), 31-2; H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 23-4; Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, 733; "The Poland Creamery," Hill-Top, 19 August 1900, 1-2; Bennett, ed., Poland, 63, 69.
after a fire burned down S. W. Foster's creamery at Dry Mills in 1896, the Shakers began taking their cream to Poland. They delivered over twelve hundred pounds to the dairy in 1898 and more than quadrupled the total the next year. They also sold cream directly to the Rickers. In 1900 combined sales from a herd of about thirty cows netted the Shakers nearly sixty dollars in income. By filling the demand for cream locally or for milk in Portland, many other dairy farmers in the area profited as well.13

The Poland Dairy Association succeeded because it had one decisive advantage over its predecessor -- the Poland Spring resort was flourishing. During a typical week in 1895, guests at the Poland Spring and Mansion Houses, both of which used Poland butter exclusively, consumed 1025 pounds of the product. Even after the hotel closed for the season, the dairy shipped standing orders to patrons of the resort. Charles Fargo of Chicago, for one, left instructions for Poland butter to be sent to him wherever he might be. In addition, the Poland Dairy Association sold butter to custom-


In 1898 the Shakers netted $83.62 by selling 1236 pounds of cream to the Poland Dairy Association and 88 gallons to the Rickers. Profits soared to $260.36 the following year when the community sold 5023.5 pounds to the dairy and 279.75 gallons to the Poland Spring House. In 1900 sales dropped to 2229 pounds and 201.25 gallons respectively and net income fell to $58.84.
ers in Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Attributing the quality of the product to the chemistry of the local soil, the Pooles boasted that Poland butter took the lead in all the markets where it was introduced.  

Local farmers also prospered by selling the Rickers some of the 2500 quarts of milk, 81 bushels of potatoes, 10,080 eggs, 1813 pounds of chicken, 34 lambs, 345 pounds of veal, and 29 bushels of berries used at the resort each week. Hiram W. Ricker estimated that the family purchased nearly sixteen thousand dollars worth of Maine farm goods in 1893 alone. As W. W. McCann matter-of-factly assessed the economic impact of the Poland Spring resort, "it creates a demand for what I can raise on the farm."  

Observers attributed the prosperity of farmers such as McCann to sterling individual character. Horace J. Brown, for instance, was credited with increasing by fourfold the fertility of the farm he had purchased from Daniel Atwood through "diligence and proper cultivation." Where the property once had been hard pressed to support four cows, it accommodated a dairy herd of eighteen by 1890. Yet, it was neither hard work, intelligence, thrift, nor industry that really distinguished Atwood from Brown. Instead, it was the

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"Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 3; "Poland Creamery," Hill-Top, 19 August 1900, 2; Agriculture of Maine (1888), 32; H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 24, 98.

increased opportunities made possible by the presence in Poland of the resort, the dairy, the canning factories, and the railroad. The greater access to markets provided by rail integrated farms into the world of modern commerce and forced farmers to become businessmen. The family-oriented, independent yeoman of Atwood's era was being supplanted by the market-driven, interdependent, capitalist farmer of Brown's day. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of pastoralism clung to the ideal of agrarian republican virtue long after it ceased to reflect reality.16

"This Process of Sorting and Sifting"

Henry and George Poole well understood the transformation of agriculture taking place in Poland. They had no illusions about a bygone golden age. To the contrary, the brothers remembered midcentury as a time when the self-dependence and isolation of farmers had led to hardship and uncertainty. It had been an era when most farmers in town were more likely to be visited by a deputy sheriff serving a foreclosure notice than by a newspaper reporter seeking a story.17

In 1850 getting local produce to market meant traveling to Portland, the only sizable trading center in the region. The Pooles painted a bleak, albeit sympathetic, portrait of men who loaded their one-horse pungs with hogs, chickens,

16Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, 731-2.
17H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 96-7.
turkeys, butter, cheese, applesauce, and dried apples and then headed out into the cold on the two-day, thirty-five mile journey, four to five times a winter. The scarce profit they made was not enough to keep most farmers out of debt and thus, most families out of poverty. A more unflattering side of country life during this period was the scene at the corner store. The Pooles portrayed it as the hangout of the town’s loafers, idlers and dissipated men, who "met to talk politics, drink rum, fight and swap horses."  

The golden age of agriculture, according to the Pooles, was the present. The same pung load of goods that brought twenty-five to fifty dollars in money and goods in 1850 was worth three times that amount in cash in 1890. Rather than being in debt, a farmer was now likely to have money invested in savings banks, government bonds, and railroad stocks. The times were so good that the Pooles could not imagine any wise Poland farmer would trade places with one of his counterparts in the West.  

Improved transportation was one reason farming became more profitable. Trains made perishable products such as milk and bulk staples such as potatoes, apples, and sweet corn easier to get to market. Moreover, they opened markets well beyond Portland to Maine produce. It was no coincidence, therefore, that on his trip to Poland the reporter for the

\[18\text{Ibid.}, 95-7.\]

\[19\text{Ibid.}, 95-6.\]
Lewiston Falls Journal saw some of the best farms near the Empire Station of the Grand Trunk Railroad, or that Jesse M. Libby reported in the 1870s that dairying was "a growing interest among the farmers . . . especially along the line of the railroad."20

Railroads were only one way technology transformed the countryside. The introduction of new farm equipment also increased productivity; so, too, did better livestock breeding and more intelligent crop husbandry. The impact of progress was so great that by the last decade of the nineteenth century, some of the larger farms in town were being described as "experimental agricultural stations." The Pooles cited this more scientific approach to agriculture as another factor contributing to the improved economic condition of local farmers.21

The third reason for the improved condition of agriculture was the growing population in the industrial cities. Urban centers not only provided markets for food from the countryside, they also served as outlets for the surplus population of rural areas. What most people viewed with alarm as the crisis of rural depopulation, the Pooles welcomed as the solution to the problem of rural poverty, which they

20Ibid., 95-6; "Trip to Poland," Lewiston Falls Journal, 20 July 1860; Sanford and Everts, Atlas and History of Androscoggin County Maine, 114.

21H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 17, 95-6, 98; Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, 726.
essentially regarded as the consequence of overpopulation. The brothers reasoned that the migration of the poor to cities improved everyone’s standard of living. Rural paupers found steady employment, while those who stayed behind benefitted from a higher per capita income.\textsuperscript{22}

Because of the economic opportunities available in Poland, the town experienced only a slight loss of population. Between 1860 and 1890, the number of residents decreased from 2746 to 2472, a reduction of ten percent. In most bordering communities, the decline ranged from twenty-five to thirty percent. What concerned the Pooles was not how many people were leaving the area, rather who was leaving. Disproportionately, it was intelligent and enterprising youths. Yet, even these departures were not "wholly irreparable," the brothers believed, for machines more than made up for the loss of labor.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22}H. A. and G. W. Poole, \textit{History of Poland}, 96.

For an account of how a northern New England town lacking both direct rail service and a major resort managed to maintain social and economic equilibrium despite depopulation, see Barron, \textit{Those Who Stayed Behind}.

\textsuperscript{23}Grenville M. Donham, comp., \textit{Maine Register, State Year-Book and Legislative Manual} (Portland, ME: Grenville M. Donham, 1901); H. A. and G. W. Poole, \textit{History of Poland}, 95.

One nearby town, Oxford, actually experienced almost a fourteen percent increase in population between 1860 and 1890. Population figures for 1900 were not used because sections of Poland and Minot were united to form a new town, Mechanic Falls, in 1893.

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The Pooles proposed a surprising fourth explanation for the recent progress in agriculture -- monopolies. Asking readers familiar with the harangues of Populists to hear them out, the brothers explained that merging three or four unprofitable farms into one successful venture was desirable. It led to more work, higher wages, better skills, and less poverty. The Pooles concluded:

This process of sorting and sifting, this policy of giving farms entirely over to crops for which they are best fitted, or finding out what they are made for, and respecting the answer, of treating nature as an ally rather than as an enemy, are going on, and will continue to go in spite of the efforts which may be made to arrest or defeat them.\(^2\)

Although the Pooles' assessment of the state of agriculture was decidedly bullish, it was neither naive nor romantic. They readily acknowledged that even for the most successful farmer, the vocation was "somewhat irksome in some respects, making long days and causing close confinement." Nevertheless, the brothers were certain that given the current economic conditions, farmers stood to earn "handsome profits" if they were thrifty, industrious, and good managers.\(^2\)

\[\begin{array}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Town} & \text{Population-1860} & \text{1890} & \% \text{Change} \\
\hline
\text{Oxford} & 1281 & 1455 & +13.6 \\
\text{Poland} & 2746 & 2472 & -10.0 \\
\text{Casco} & 1116 & 844 & -24.4 \\
\text{Raymond} & 1229 & 927 & -24.6 \\
\text{Minot} & 1799 & 1355 & -24.7 \\
\text{New Gloucester} & 1654 & 1234 & -25.4 \\
\text{Otisfield} & 1199 & 838 & -30.1 \\
\hline
\end{array}\]

\(^2\)Ibid., 97-8.

\(^2\)Ibid., 114.

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The commercialization of agriculture exempted no one, not even the communal Shakers who lived within sight of the Poland Spring resort. As owners of one of the largest farming operations in the area, the Shakers supplied the Rickers with many of the foodstuffs they served their guests, including cream, celery, peas, cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, blackberries, and chickens. A decrease in membership similar to but more severe than the widespread depopulation of nearby towns made it increasingly difficult for the group to maintain two Shaker families. Between 1860 and 1890, the number of Believers at Sabbathday Lake dropped by sixty percent, from 103 people to 41. In 1887 leaders tried to alleviate the strain on the dwindling resources of the community by closing the Poland Hill family and having its members move in with the Church family a short distance away in New Gloucester.26

Like other farmers, the Shakers addressed their labor shortage by embracing new technology. On April 20, 1889, for instance, the community purchased an Aspinwall potato planter for $85 with the expectation that it would replace and outperform the help of the boys who normally helped out with


For representative accounts of the numerous produce transactions between the Shakers and the Rickers, see "Church Record," vol. 3, New Gloucester, ME, March 25, 1884-December 31, 1889, 8/5, 8/17-26/1889, USS; Delmer C. Wilson, Diary, New Gloucester, ME, 1895, 5/25, 8/7, USS; Delmer C. Wilson, Diary, New Gloucester, ME, 1900, 5/14, 6/29, 8/3, USS.
the task. Moreover, the Shakers' use of the planter demonstrates the informal networks of cooperation that extended among local farmers. Eleven days after acquiring the machine, Elder William D. Dumont planted over two acres of potatoes for True Merrill. The following week, Dumont went up to Poland Spring with the Aspinwall planter. In two days, he planted six acres with the twenty-eight different varieties of potato the Rickers wanted to test. On the 18th of May, the Shaker elder planted for W. Colomy. Five days later, Dumont traveled to Norton Pope's farm on White Oak Hill. For planting three acres of potatoes, the Shakers received six dollars from Pope.²⁷

Norton Q. Pope was representative of a new breed of farmer who benefitted from the sorting and sifting process -- the wealthy urban businessman for whom agriculture was a leisurely diversion. Like John Hanscom, the head of a local canning factory, Pope resided in Brooklyn, New York, but summered on White Oak Hill. He was drawn to the area by an investment in the Lewiston and Auburn Electric Railway and a wife, Abby, who was a native of Poland. During the 1880s, Pope amassed a 530-acre estate by buying up six farms. His White Oak Hill Farm raised saddle, race, and coach horses, the latter for breeding purposes; monkeys; and show and hunting

dogs. Pope’s kennel bred prize-winning Scottish deerhounds, blue belton setters, English greyhounds, and stags. Following the death of his first wife in 1894, Pope remarried and severed his ties with Poland. His horses and farm tools were auctioned off in 1895. Amos Knight bought the property five years later and began turning it into a rival resort complete with a hotel, the White Oak Hill House, and a spring.28

The high bidder for one of Pope’s prime breeding stallions, Telmaque, was James S. Sanborn. Like Pope, Sanborn was a successful businessman who came to Poland during the summertime to get away from city life and to try his hand at farming. The Maine native had made his fortune as a partner in Chase and Sanborn’s, the Boston-based coffee and tea import company. As "the New England Coffee King" looked homeward for a summer place, the Pulsifer homestead, one of the oldest and largest farms in Poland, attracted his interest. In 1886 he bought the three-hundred-acre property from John Pulsifer, the husband of Janette Ricker’s sister, Martha. The next year Sanborn had one of the largest and most attractive barns in New England built at the estate he named Elmwood Farm.29

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28Hill-Top, 28 July 1895, 8; H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 115-6, 120-1; "Church Record," vol. 4, 6/27/1895, USS; Bennett, ed., Poland, 33, 50, 70.

29H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 40-1, 121; Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 14; "Elmwood Farm," Hill-Top, 16 August 1896, 1-2; "Elmwood Farm," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 11; Richard Herndon, comp., Men of Progress: Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Leaders in Business and Professional Life in and of the State of Maine, ed. Philip W. McIntyre and
The farm annually produced 250 barrels of apples, 60 tons of hay and 6 acres of ensilage corn. It also produced large quantities of milk from a herd of thoroughbred Holstein cows, most of which Sanborn had imported from Germany. Elmwood achieved prominence, however, as one of the leading breeders of French coach horses in the United States. The prize of the stable was a bright bay Arabian stallion with a white star on its forehead, which Sanborn had purchased for four thousand dollars. The thoroughbred possessed an impeccable ancestry, reportedly tracing back ninety-four times to the most renowned horses of Arabia and North Africa. Over two hundred years of careful breeding had produced Gemare, standing sixteen hands tall, weighing 1250 pounds, and possessing a symmetrical build, fiery eyes, and an intelligent face.30

Sanborn, and Pope before him, was responding to an "earnest" demand for well-bred coach horses. As the Pooles noted with amazement in 1890, there was "no supply and no source of supply" for these animals. Aware of what breeders

William F. Blanding (Boston: New England Magazine, 1897), 201; Bennett, ed., Poland, 12-3.

30H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 41-2; "Sanborn's Stock Farm," Hill-Top, 12 August 1894, 2; Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 14.

In light of the emphasis the 1890 Poland Spring Water pamphlet placed on maintaining pure blood lines, it is interesting to note that the Hill-Top described the French coach horse as "the result of the mingling of the blood of the Arab, Barb, and Thoroughbred." Sanborn further diluted the pedigree of his horses by mating imported stallions with domestic mares. He advertised the offspring as "half-bred French coach carriage horses."
at White Oak Hill and Elmwood were attempting, the brothers anticipated the emergence of "the people's horse." The "horse of the future" would be a cross between French stallions, with blood "clean and straight from the desert" flowing through their veins, and native-stock mares. The Pooles predicted that "in a few years the finest carriage-horse in the world and a noble class of roadsters would be seen in our city and on our suburban roadways."31

Sanborn expected that some of the best customers for his one hundred and fifty horses would be the urban and suburban patrons of the Poland Spring resort, located only three miles from his country estate. Advertisements and articles in the Hill-Top hailed the horses offered for sale at Elmwood as stylish, well behaved, fearless, courageous, durable, and swift, in short, as ideal candidates to pull a wide variety of carriages. Sanborn invited guests of the resort to come to the farm and watch the animals go through their daily exercise sessions. To accommodate travel-weary patrons, he even occasionally went so far as to bring a cavalcade of coach horses led by Gemare to Poland Spring.32

Sanborn and Pope were not alone in having the financial means to operate "model farms" in Poland. The Rickers themselves built up an operation that rivaled White Oak Hill

31H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 43-4.

32Poland Centennial, 112; "The Ideal Road Horse," Hill-Top, 30 June 1895, 10; Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 14; "Elmwood Farm," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 11.
and Elmwood in scale, if not in kind. Visitors first became aware of the agricultural landscape as the stage brought them past fields of corn and through patches of grain on their journey up Ricker Hill. The importance placed on conveying guests swiftly and comfortably in horse-drawn vehicles as well as on serving them pure and fresh food grew out of the Rickers' belief that farming was one of the "indispensable adjuncts of pleasure and health resorts."  

One of the leading features of the resort farm was the dairy that supplied fresh milk, cream, and butter. The dairy herd at Poland Spring ranged in size from ninety to one hundred cows, about half of which were giving milk at any one time. Some of the calves were destined "to delight the epicure with sweet and delicate chops of veal"; the rest would go on to provide guests with dairy products. In 1899 milk production from fifty cows, thirteen of which were registered, varied from eight to twenty quarts per animal each day. This amount supplied less than half the total consumed at the resort. The herds of local dairy farmers made up the shortfall.  

To shelter the cows, the Rickers had a new barn built in 1898 at a cost of seven thousand dollars. On January 16,  

33Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, 726; "Poland Spring, the Paradise of New England," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6; "The Man Behind the Hotel," Hill-Top, 10 August 1902, 1.  

34"Our Cows," Hill-Top, 26 July 1896, 6; Bennett, ed., Poland, 75; "Where Cows Abide," Hill-Top, 23 July 1899, 2.
1899, two Shakers, Brother Delmer C. Wilson of Sabbathday Lake and Elder Arthur Bruce of Canterbury, New Hampshire, came to Poland Spring to see the "regal" facility. While walking through the 128-foot-long, 44-foot-wide, main portion of the barn, they would have viewed the milk room and hay mows. At the end of this section of the building, they would have turned left and entered an adjoining wing, measuring 112 feet long by 42 feet wide. There the two Shaker brothers could have inspected the silo, granary, calf pens, and cow stalls. Returning outside, the visitors would have noticed that the area between the two wings was fenced off to form a large barnyard.35

As they did in the case of the spring house and bottling works, the Rickers took great pride in the sanitary conditions of the new cow barn. Although state officials had given the dairy herd clean bills of health in 1896 and 1897, the Rickers invited guests to inspect the dairy operation for themselves, so long as they did so before 5 A. M. or after 5 P. M. At the barn, visitors would have found cows living in what the Hill-Top described as royal luxury, attended to by "numerous keepers in their clean white coats." Reportedly, an appear-

ance of cleanliness pervaded the building and a delightful odor filled the air.\textsuperscript{36}

Alvan Bolster Ricker oversaw both the farm and culinary departments at the resort. The middle son of Hiram and Janette Ricker differed from his two brothers in both appearance and demeanor. Edward and Hiram both sported long beards like their father; save for a moustache, Alvan remained clean shaven. Edward and Hiram had very public roles at the resort and were remembered as being perfect gentlemen; Alvan labored behind the scenes and earned a reputation for being "a rough talking man." Nevertheless, his executive ability, mathematical skills, and "exceptional memory for details" well suited the so-called "Commissary-General of Poland Spring" for the vital and difficult task of making sure several hundred people received three sumptuous meals a day.\textsuperscript{37}

Alvan Ricker gained his martial moniker and reputation for profanity from his dealings with the workers under his command. "AB" supervised between eleven and twenty farm hands who tended vegetable gardens, shepherded sheep, and cared for

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the dairy herd. His lieutenant was his only son George. The Hill-Top reported in 1899 that although the boy was only nine years old, he was already familiar with all aspects of the farm, down to where every seed was planted. Impressed by the involvement of George and his cousins, Charles and Hiram W. Ricker, Jr., in the affairs of the resort, the editors confidently predicted that "there is little likelihood of the place passing from the Ricker name for many, many years."

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the sorting and sifting process in agriculture continued. The four hundred acres the Shakers had vacated on Poland Hill, for example, still remained largely unused. The property languished on the market for a dozen years, no doubt because the Shakers were slow to lower their asking price. In the 1870s the ten buildings, the most outstanding of which was a large, three-and-a-half-story dwelling house, and land, which included a mineral spring, had been valued at $30,000. If this was too high a price to pay for farmland, surely, the Shakers thought, it was a fair price for property which had the potential to be easily converted into a resort.

Perhaps Elder William Dumont intended to remind C. P. Mattocks, a former owner of Poland Packing Company, and Thomas

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38"Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 1; Souvenir List of Employees (Poland Spring, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1900), unpagedinated; Hill-Top, 1 September 1895, 7; "We Abound in Sheep," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 1-2; "Where Cows Abide," Hill-Top, 23 July 1899, 3.

39Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, 750.
P. Beals, his partner, of this possibility when on January 24, 1899 he included a sample of Shaker Crystal Spring Water with his proposal to sell Poland Hill for twelve thousand dollars. The offer was not accepted. The prospect of having a rival resort down the road did, however, arouse the interest of the Rickers. A week after Mattocks and Beals passed on the property, Edward and Hiram W. Ricker called at Sabbathday Lake to discuss buying Poland Hill. After three weeks of negotiations, the trustees of the community agreed to the Rickers' terms -- $7500 dollars at six percent interest to be paid over ten years. In May of 1899 both parties signed the agreement drawn up by attorney William Newell. While the Rickers may have purchased the Poland Hill property to keep it out of the hands of potential competitors, they did have a use for the land. The site supplied the resort with apples and potatoes and eventually became home to a pig farm.40

Lapping the Cream of Country Life Without the Milking

The transaction between the Rickers and the Shakers exemplified the reality of agriculture in New England during the late nineteenth century. Marginal farms were either being abandoned or consolidated with more successful farms. Agriculture was becoming ever more competitive and commercial. Nevertheless, promoters of the Poland Spring resort perpetuat-

40"Church Record," vol. 5, 62-5, 76; Bennett, ed., Poland, 75.
ed an idealized depiction of the countryside that masked the transformation taking place. Ironically, the Rickers made the contrast between antimodern image and modern reality more vivid by promoting the pastoral landscape even as the tourist industry contributed to the modernization of agriculture.41

The persistence of pastoralism despite the inroads of urban and industrial progress reflected the pervasiveness and depth of agrarian mythology in Gilded-Age America. Many people rooted national character and strength in virtues derived from tilling the soil. They were alarmed, therefore, by the widespread abandonment of farms and depopulation of towns, especially in New England. Part of the appeal of a visit to Poland Spring was the opportunity to assess the condition of the countryside and experience a semblance of country life first hand.42

41 Barron, Those Who Stayed Behind, 31; Burns, Pastoral Inventions, 6.

Others have noted the irony of the pastoral ideal and commercial reality of agriculture. Barron has asserted that the difference between the perceptions and reality of country life "reflected the divergence of urban and rural culture during the second half of the nineteenth century." Similarly, Burns has referred to the inability of the art world to "come to terms with the fact that agriculture itself had taken on all the trappings of capitalist enterprise" as the "denial of actuality."

42 Perceptions of the problem of rural depopulation, which contemporary commentators wrote about prolifically, have been investigated in Wilson, Hill Country, 97-138; Day, Farming in Maine, 171-9; Barron, Those Who Stayed Behind, 31-50; Burns, Pastoral Inventions, 77-89.
Inviting guests to "walk down through the 'farm' in front of the Hotel" was one way the Rickers highlighted the pastoral dimension of the resort landscape. In the case of Byron Moulton, a visitor from the Philadelphia suburb of Rosemont, a summer vacation at Poland Spring offered the chance to try his hand at haying. The Hill-Top reported in 1894 that farmer Moulton was "exceedingly proud of his skill with the scythe and can cut a fine swath." Despite the pride this purely nostalgic exercise inspired, the skill exhibited was of little value to modern farmers who now used mowing machines to cut their hay.4

For those guests more inclined to spend their time reading a newspaper on the veranda than swinging a scythe in a field, the Hill-Top periodically recalled scenes from the agrarian past. In an 1898 article, for instance, the paper reminisced about the carefree days of youth when boys would race a pet lamb from a farmhouse down to a dusty roadside and back again. A few years later, an editorial on the charm of country roads invoked the image of a newly abandoned farm to recall "happier days" when the owners husked corn and sipped cider.4


44"We Abound in Sheep," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 2; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 September 1901, 8.
The Hill-Top recommended carriage rides through "quiet country places" as a way for guests to bring back "all the blessed memories of early days." A twelve-mile trip north to Oxford, Maine, offered glimpses of inviting farmhouses, frolicsome young calves, orchard trees, barn cats, and pasture walls. Meanwhile, a journey through Poland featured sights of fields, fences, and farmhouses that seemed as though they had been there "all the time"; sounds of tinkling bells coming from the hundreds of pastures where cows grazed; and smells of new-mown hay, clover, and ripening fruit. The setting had the potential to invigorate visitors and inspire poets and artists.45

One painter who was indeed inspired by the agricultural landscape of Poland was Delbert Dana Coombs, a native of nearby New Gloucester. Coombs regularly displayed his work at the art exhibitions hosted by the resort. The Hill-Top praised the artist as "an excellent painter of the pastoral," adding that "his cattle live and move in green pastures, so naturally does he treat his subjects." Guests thought highly of his creations as well. "In Green Pastures" by Coombs was the first painting sold at the Poland Spring art gallery. The purchaser was George F. Parker of Philadelphia who paid $150 for the work in 1895. Two years later, J. Milton Hall of

45"Sanborn's Stock Farm," Hill-Top, 12 August 1894, 1-2; "Old Oxford," Hill-Top, 7 August 1898, 2; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 8; "Perfect Poland," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 2.
Providence bought "Cattle Picture" for the same price. When the friends of Mr. and Mrs. James Sanborn were looking in 1897 for the perfect house-warming gift for the couple's new home at Elmwood, they, too, selected a Coombs painting."

The Rickers thought so highly of Coombs's work that they commissioned the artist to paint one of his pastoral landscapes for themselves. "Ricker Hill," completed in 1896 and measuring four feet by six feet, presented an interesting perspective on the resort from a viewpoint on a hillside located across Middle Range Pond. In the immediate foreground, Coombs's trademark cows lay contentedly; in the distant background, stood the stately Poland Spring House. The image of pastoral tranquility may have been appealing to the proprietors and patrons of the hotel, but by reversing the prominence of agriculture and tourism, the picture distorted the reality of the local economy.

Coombs painted a second Poland Spring landscape in 1907. The vantage for "Calling the Cows" was a pasture near the cow barn. Once again, the foreground focused on cattle, with buildings -- the barn and the hotel -- consigned to the background. In this scene, the artist also included two tiny figures, the farm workers who were in charge of calling the cows.

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Their obscurity amidst the dozens of cows and the broad landscape encompassed by the four-foot-by-six-foot painting made an important statement about the significance of their labor. Generally, hard work was one of the values celebrated by pastoralists. Coombs, however, understood his urban audience. Notwithstanding Byron Moulton's brief foray into the hay field, the closest many guests of the resort wanted to get to farm work was a picture on a wall. In 1921 the Hill-Top summed up the real appeal of Poland Spring's pastoral setting with the observation that "visitors may lap all the cream of country life and do none of the milking."47

One of the most prolific promoters of nostalgic pastoralism at the turn of the century was a contemporary of Coombs and fellow Maine native, Charles Asbury Stephens. From his home in Norway, Stephens wrote about the country life he had experienced as a boy growing up in the western part of the state at midcentury. In 1885 he began writing stories about

47 "Editorial," Hill-Top, 30 July 1921, 6; Burns, Pastoral Inventions, 244; "The Art Exhibition," Hill-Top, 23 August 1903, 7.

Burns has observed that the invisibility of farm laborers in nineteenth-century artwork was symptomatic of the imposition of urban values on the rural landscape. The ideal of revery and recreation replaced the reality of action and endeavor.

Another local painter who promoted the pastoral ideal in her artwork was Harriette Wood Robinson. A native of Lewiston, Maine, Robinson studied with D. D. Coombs. Her contribution to the 1903 art exhibition at Poland Spring, "Barn Interior," sold to an appreciative guest, William E. Wayward of Uxbridge, Massachusetts.
Old Home Farm for the Boston-based periodical *Youth's Companion*. The premise of the long running series was that after their five sons were killed in the Civil War, the Old Squire and Grandmother Ruth had adopted six orphaned grandchildren. Set in "a typical Maine farming community" of the 1860s during a time "when life was simpler," the stories followed the homely romance and wholesome adventures of the "wonderfully harmonious family circle."4

In a typical display of the pastoral nostalgia Stephens was so adept at evoking, one of those adventures brought three of the youths to Poland Spring in 1867. The group had embarked on one of the mid-century trading trips to Portland

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Chamberlain has stated that Stephens had a very great knack for verisimilitude and thus, "most of his stories were accepted as a true record of experience." Smith has described the stories as "perhaps our best glimpse of rural Maine in the mid-nineteenth century." Similarly, Whitney has acclaimed the author as "the most authentic interpreter of the old rural ways of life which gave American society many of its basic values," and his stories as "one of the best, most accurate portraits of our pre-urban culture which so carefully nurtured those values." Finally, Anderson has credited Stephens with blending realism and romanticism and proposed that he depicted the Old Squire as a progressive farmer.
described by the Poole brothers. Against the advice of the Old Squire, whose "weather eye" detected an approaching storm, Addison, Theodora, and Kit had set out on the sixty-mile journey with a wagon load of dried apples and sage, as well as with a couple of Durham veal calves in tow. They made it as far as the Mansion House before the onset of a drenching northeast rainstorm. In a display of old-fashioned neighborliness, Hiram Ricker, a boyhood friend of the Old Squire, comes to the youngsters' aid and puts the trading party up for the night."

Turn-of-the-century pastoralism often paid homage to the virtues of rural life in addition to celebrating nostalgia for the past and the beauty of the countryside. The same essay in the 1888 Maine state agricultural report that pleaded with farmers to be better businessmen portrayed farms as the "perfect pictures of peace and tranquility," "the preserves of ideas that have built up the republic," and sources of purity, honesty, and uprightness. Cities were regarded as infertile environments to nurture these qualities because they were "more than one-half European." Farm country, in contrast, was viewed as "essentially American." The author asserted, therefore, that the "greatness, goodness and power of the nation" rested on the vitality of agriculture."

"Stephens, Great Year, 258-9.

"Bowen, in Agriculture of Maine (1888), 71.
In her novel published the same year as this essay, Jane Patterson echoed the theme that virtue was rooted in the countryside. Soon after arriving at a resort strikingly similar to Poland Spring, one of the characters, Charles Raynor, observes that "these rural places nurture the virtues." "They draw life from the virgin soil, as the trees do," he continues. Attorney Raynor goes on to wish that his career would permit him to live in the country, lamenting that "the vicinity of cities is soon glossed over by the hand of cultivation."^51

Other commentators also used the venue of Poland Spring to link virtue with the countryside. In the conclusion to a speech delivered dedicating the Maine State Building at the resort in 1895, United States Senator William Frye of Maine identified hard work, economy, thrift, temperance, patience, and faith as "the legitimate fruit gathered from the rocky hill-side farms of the dear old Pine Tree State." In the same year, Poland Spring Centennial asserted that a byproduct of the Rickers’ forest farm was the family’s "sturdy, rugged New England stock, inbred in the soil, hard working, persistent, energetic, alert, enterprising." Lewiston Journal writer Arthur G. Staples concurred with this assessment. He described the Rickers as a "stout old family that got their fibre and fullness of life off a hill-top on a farm of

granitic substratum." Staples was especially complimentary to Edward Ricker whom he characterized as an old-fashioned, hardworking farm boy, possessing the thoughtfulness, resourcefulness, purposefulness, and vision to see beyond "the tops of his potato-patches."52

The Hill-Top used similar agrarian rhetoric in 1904 when it lauded Maine Grange official Solon Chase as "a product of the soil, a typical Yankee, honest, energetic, and earnest." By this time, the octogenarian from Turner was a relic of the "lean and hungry years" of Maine agriculture that followed the Panic of 1873. Chase had advocated inflation as the solution to plummeting farm prices and had run for governor in 1882 as the nominee of the Greenback party. One of his staple stump speeches on the campaign trail had been "Them Steers." To illustrate the effect of deflation, Chase would bring a yoke of oxen to a rally and then explain that he would be hard-pressed to receive fifty dollars for steers that he had purchased for one hundred dollars. Over two decade later, Chase was still giving the speech, but now as a quaint pastoral relic for the entertainment of cosmopolitan resort patrons instead of as a populist politician for the edification of local farmers.53


53"Uncle Solon," Hill-Top, 10 July 1904, 30; Day, Farming in Maine, 36.
In 1905 Frank Carlos Griffith, the co-editor of the *Hill-Top*, attempted to document the link between personal character and living in Maine by publishing a roster of over four hundred "eminent men and women who were born in the old Pine Tree State." Commenting on the significance of the three-part series, Griffith wrote:

The list of distinguished people, born in Maine, which we have been running in these columns, is a startling illustration of the productive record of this rock ribbed and pine covered state, in the intellectual line, for it has furnished governors, statesmen, educators, soldiers, financiers, builders, merchants, physicians, scholars, and others, to the world, until this list is almost inexhaustible.

Besides being an exercise in chauvinism, the roll call reassured readers that rural agrarian virtues were still alive and well.54

Efforts to preserve and pass on these virtues in a nation speeding toward greater urbanization and industrialization took several forms during the Gilded Age. "Fresh Air" charities raised money to send poor children from the city to the country for weeklong vacations. Originating in New York City in 1872 and spreading to sixteen other cities by the end of the century, the project benefitted over half a million young people each summer.55


In August of 1899 the Rev. D. W. Waldron, Superintendent of the Boston City Missionary Society, came to Poland Spring and spoke on the "fresh air" ministry. After his talk, guests showered him with over four hundred dollars to support the work, nearly half that amount coming from two anonymous donors. The following year, patrons of the resort made a much more modest, although no less appreciated, contribution of forty-six dollars to the "Country Week" program run by the Boston YMCU. This charity also provided the urban poor with the opportunity for rest and recreation at "some proper place in the country or by the sea-shore." It, however, brought city dwellers and country folks into direct contact with one another by placing participants with a farm family.5 6

Another project that brought urban and rural worlds together was "Old Home Week." The citizens of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, held the first old home celebration in 1853 as a way of getting people who had left the town to return for a visit. Nearly half a century later, New Hampshire State Senator Frank W. Rollins revived the idea in an article written for New England Magazine in 1897. Two years later, sixty-five towns in New Hampshire, supported by now Governor Rollins and the State Board of Agriculture, celebrated Old Home Week during the last weekend in August. The success of

5 6 Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 3; "Sunday Service," Hill-Top, 22 July 1900, 2; "Country Week," Hill-Top, 29 July 1900, 7.
the event prompted the states of Maine and Vermont to institute Old Home Week in 1900 and 1901 respectively."

The concept underlying old home week — luring the country-born members of the urban middle class back to their virtuous rural roots — attracted many guests to Poland Spring. Crosby Noyes, for one, stayed at the resort in 1900 because it provided him with the chance to be "among his native hills, and the scenes he loved when a boy." Born and raised on a farm in nearby Minot, Maine, Noyes went on to become the publisher of the Washington (DC) Evening Star, a position that earned him a place on Frank Griffith's list of Maine's notable sons. Noyes returned to the resort in 1901 to attend the reunion of the hometown school he had attended as a boy. The next year he again made what was becoming an annual visit to Poland Spring in order to participate in Minot's centennial celebration."

In his address at the event, Noyes described his birthplace as a farming community surrounded by the "beauties of


nature" and populated by families "from the sterling old Puritan stock." The combination of the natural environment and Puritan heritage found there and in the other towns of "the little southwest corner of Maine" produced, according to Noyes, "a mighty host of able and worthy men." Among others, he had in mind Hiram Ricker. Noyes praised the patriarch of the family for having built "the best hotel in the world," featuring "the great essentials of good air, good water, good food, and good attendance." He attributed this impressive achievement not only to the assistance of Janette Ricker and the couple's three sons, but also to "the never-say-die grit of the southwest Maine Yankee."

Although the Hill-Top no doubt agreed with Noyes's assessment of southwest Maine Yankees, it was moved to comment in 1903 on the excessively sentimental pastoralism of Old Home Week celebrants. The paper scoffed at the perception that in the good old days nine out of ten people lived on a farm and that now seven out of ten of those farms were abandoned. Furthermore, it wondered with bemusement why painters and photographers went "into raptures over the dilapidated, tumble-down structure" rather than "an architecturally fine, well-kept set of farm buildings." Finally, the periodical ridiculed the stock figure of Old Home Week stories, the rich moralist who stood before the ruins of a farmhouse ready to

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trade his oil and railroad bonds for the happy days of his youth when he herded cows barefoot, hunted woodchucks, attended the red schoolhouse, and ran off to see the circus.  

Pastoralism could not be reined in easily. Even as the sorting and sifting process in agriculture and the rural migration to cities continued during the early decades of the twentieth century, nostalgia for a simpler past and the belief in agrarian republicanism retained their cultural power. While the reality of the pastoral landscape faded away for many Americans, D. D. Coombs’s paintings of northern New England landscapes, C. A. Stephens’s stories about Old Home Farm, and the Ricker family’s country farm on the hilltop kept alive the image. Ideally for the leisure class, visitors to the city of vivid contrasts could lap the cream of country life without having actually to live it.61

60 "Old Home Romances," Hill-Top, 9 August 1903, 1-3.

61 One of the outlets for pastoralism during this period was the country life movement. Ironically, urban reformers’ progressive solution to the problems of rural America -- the industrialization of agriculture -- alienated country life more and more from the agrarian virtues many in the movement idealized. For more on this topic, see William L. Bowers, The Country Life Movement in America, 1900-1920 (Port Washington, NY, and London: Kennikat Press, 1974); David B. Danbom, The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930 (Ames, IA: Iowa State University, 1979).
In 1860 the landscape of Poland Spring consisted of a collection of natural resources awaiting development. Farmers plowed fields on which to raise corn and potatoes. Mill owners dammed the outlet of Middle Range Pond and the waters of the Little Androscoggin River to provide power for grinding grain and sawing clapboards. Wood cutters felled pine trees to make lumber. And, of course, Hiram Ricker bottled spring water to sell to the sick. Given such a thoroughly utilitarian view of the environment, the potential commercial value of the surrounding landscape's natural beauty was scarcely imaginable.1

Over the next four decades, the Rickers and their urban clientele discovered nature. They no longer regarded it only as resources to be processed and consumed, but also as scenes to be viewed and contemplated, moments to be experienced and enjoyed, and assets to be promoted and conserved. As the plow gave way to the pen, the ax to the paint brush, and the saw to

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the camera, a host of publicists for the resort used the modern media of communication to turn utilitarian nature into romantic Nature. Their messages promoted its temporal permanence, aesthetic beauty, therapeutic healthfulness, and spiritual inspiration principally, and related issues such as regional identity, sensory appeal, contemplative solitude, romantic innocence, and resource conservation collaterally. The Rickers, meanwhile, furnished a variety of means to experience the new Nature. Guests could admire the countryside from coaches and carriages, mountains and hills from the veranda, flora and fauna along wooded paths, grounds and gardens from boardwalks, the ponds aboard the steam launch, and flowers and plants in the greenhouse.

The Edenic view of nature owed its origin in part to the influence of romanticism. Inspired by the European romantic movement, many American authors and artists produced works throughout the nineteenth century that brought the aesthetic qualities of nature to the foreground. The grandeur, sublimity, and picturesqueness they recorded in their creations reminded readers and viewers of the divinity of God's creation. For many people, the return to nature represented the restoration of the link between the mundane manmade and the sacred natural worlds that the artificiality of urban life had
eroded. In such a mind-set, experiencing nature often took on moral implications.²

In addition to the ideological considerations that pulled many middle and upper-class residents out of cities, social factors pushed them toward the country. To escape poverty, crime, disease, overcrowding, traffic, noise, and pollution, urban residents with the financial means went back to nature to watch birds, read nature books, recreate in parks, and vacation at camps and resorts. Peter J. Schmitt has termed this new romantic approach to nature Arcadianism. He has contended that "this urban response valued nature's spiritual impact above its economic importance." Unlike the agrarian ideology that prevailed in the countryside and rooted virtue in cultivation of the land, the Arcadian myth flourished in the city and rooted virtue in contemplation of the natural landscape.³

As the influence of the romanticism suggests, there was little natural about the way Gilded-Age Americans viewed nature. To the contrary, as Kenneth John Myers has argued,


their understanding of landscapes was socially constructed. Through travel narratives and landscape paintings, the natural environment became an objectified aesthetic commodity to be consumed by the leisure class. Ironically, however, Myers has contended that "the object of landscape was a disinterested appreciation of natural beauty." His study of the New York Catskills has explored the critical role this dialectic between objectification and commodification played in the transformation of the region into a popular tourist attraction during the nineteenth century.

Likewise, Dona Brown's examination of the history of tourism in the New Hampshire White Mountains has found the same dialectical process of social construction of landscape at work. She has argued that a culture industry produced and marketed nature through the media of guide books, poems, paintings, and engravings. On the other side of the transaction awaited consumers eager to participate in "the cult of romantic scenery." All along the way, the high-minded ends — experiencing the sublimity, beauty, and picturesqueness of the region — obscured the commercial means. Brown, too, has noted the irony of the situation, pointing out that "nineteenth-century tourists turned away from the allure of the


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marketplace to travel straight into the arms of the marketplace."

Although guests at Poland Spring exhibited little interest in rejecting the modern marketplace, they did expect to find a romantic natural landscape on the hilltop. The difference between the rural landscape they came to and the urban landscape they left behind represented one of the most vivid contrasts of the entire resort experience. Constant change, aesthetic blandness, architectural artifice, contagious disease, rampant materialism, cosmopolitan sophistication, and overcrowding characterized the modern Gilded-Age city. In contrast, temporal permanence, aesthetic beauty, natural artistry, therapeutic healthfulness, inspirational

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Another example of the relationship between landscape painting and the promotion of tourism, in this case in the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River, is provided by Nancy Louise Gustke, *The Special Artist in American Culture: A Biography of Frank Hamilton Taylor (1846-1927)* (Ph. D. diss., University of New Hampshire, 1991).
spirituality, romantic innocence, and contemplative solitude were qualities associated with the antimodern Edenic resort. Ironically, this socially constructed conception of the rural landscape relied heavily upon modern media to promote nature and modern means to help guests experience nature. Thus even at its most antimodern, the summer city was still powerfully shaped by modernity.

The Message: "This Land of Heavenly Favors"

Short of having inherited real estate along the coast, the Rickers were favored with an ideal location for a resort. In addition to the health and wealth-giving spring, Ricker Hill also featured groves of oak and maple, as well as stands of pine that covered much of its eastern slopes. At the base of the north side of the hill lay Upper, Middle, and Lower Range Ponds. Rising eight hundred feet above sea level, the hilltop itself provided a commanding view of the surrounding landscape. In the immediate vicinity, an undulating countryside of broad fields and rocky pastures rolled toward distant hills and mountains. Plainly visible were nearby Black Cat and Rattlesnake Mountains, plus Shaker and White Oak Hills. Farther away rose the Oxford Hills of Western Maine. Outlined on the distant horizon were the Ossipee Hills and White
Mountains of New Hampshire. This was the raw material out of which promoters of the resort constructed nature.

Typically nature meant visually attractive scenery, which came in five forms. The first was the landscape of the hilltop, whose main features were the lawns, gardens, groves, and spring. The Rickers had a large hand in shaping these settings and guests spent most of their time in this realm of nature. Expanding out in concentric circles from Ricker Hill were three different panoramas: the ponds, the hillsides, and the mountains. Overarching the topography of the region was the spherical dome of the sky, where the interplay of sun and clouds created a kaleidoscope of beautiful scenes.

Of far less interest were wilderness settings. Few visitors to the resort wanted to test their mettle against the elements or their wits against game. They were quite content to limit their encounters with wild animals to watching deer graze along the road to Danville, robins dash across the lawn, and squirrels scavenge for nuts, or to listening to bees buzz about flowers and crickets chirp in the grass. Most guests preferred a domesticated middle landscape, where primeval forests had been turned into shady groves, wild flowers were arranged into attractive bouquets, hunts were discussed with

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*Poland Mineral Spring Water: The Story of Its History and Its Marvellous Curative Properties* (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1883), 3-4; *Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir* (S. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 70-1.
visiting Indians, wildlife was mounted on walls, and even the
lowly sumach was exalted as a thing of beauty."

Guests such as William H. Wingate of Boston represented
the exception rather than the rule. After his stay at Poland
Spring in 1894, Wingate made his annual camping trip to
northernmost Maine. There he successfully hunted moose,
including the one whose head eventually came to hang in the
rotunda of the Maine State Building. The Hill-Top directed
parties interested in bagging big game to take the Bangor and
Aroostook Railroad to the County. In northern Maine, the
paper reported, "the moose and caribou are so plentiful, you
almost have to push them apart to get through the open."
Indicating the quarry modern man hunted more routinely, the
periodical advised adventurers to outfit themselves with
sealskins and furs from Renfrew, elastic stockings from Curtis
and Spindell, and a copy of the Hill-Top, which, the editors
boasted, "points the way to all the requirements of man."

Guests who wanted to experience wilder forms of nature
also traveled to the Rangeley Lakes. Advertised as offering
"Every Condition of Nature that is conducive to the creation
of contentment," the region had developed a reputation for the

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"A Good Shot," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 10; "Last Look Around," Hill-Top, 12 September 1897, 18.
excellence of its fishing and hunting. In August of 1896, Walter Berri and twelve other Poland Spring castoffs took a special car on the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad from Poland Corner to Bemis, Maine, located at the southern end of Lake Mooselookmeguntic. After spending a night there, they chartered a boat to the Upper Dam where the party spent the day trout fishing. The next morning the group headed back to Poland Spring with many fond memories and the desire to return to "Poland on the Rangeleys" again someday.9

On a glorious morning bestowed by nature in early August of 1901, Mrs. Hugh J. Chisholm led another memorable expedition to Camp Bemis. At 9 AM carriages conveyed over thirty guests of the Poland Spring House to the local Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad depot where a special car awaited. Following a four-hour journey past prosperous farms and through beautiful scenery, the party arrived at Lake Mooselookmeguntic. The Poland Spring contingent toured the lake aboard the steamer Florence E. Barker piloted by Captain Barker. Along the way, passengers admired the beautiful waters, gazed at the surrounding mountains, watched for deer and bear, and stopped to admire the camps at the Birches.10

During the second half of the whirlwind trip through Western Maine, the party stopped in Rumford Falls for a


10 "A Trip to Camp Bemis," Hill-Top, 11 August 1901, 15.
contrasting view of nature. As Hiram Ricker, Francis Smith, and Hugh Chisholm had recognized long ago, and the visitors now plainly saw for themselves as they watched "the angry waters of the Androscoggin" send logs tumbling over the falls, nature had "endowed this place with one of the best water powers in the State." During a tour of the local paper mill, the party observed both logs as nature had created them and paper bags and newsprint as machinery had manufactured them. The Hill-Top credited the "marvelous" progress on display in the town to one person — Mr. Chisholm. In the concluding example of technological progress, the train delivered the excursionists back at Poland Spring Station a mere ten hours after their departure. The paper credited the lack of fatigue and abundance of enthusiasm felt by the party to another person — Mrs. Chisholm.11

During an age of rapid and revolutionary progress exemplified by Hugh Chisholm's transformation of Rumford, the fundamental appeal of romantic nature was its permanence. The "delicate texture" of a far away hillside, for example, caused the Hill-Top to wonder whether it had been there all the time. The topic of country roads reminded the paper of highways lined with pine trees that had "stood guard, and watched the coming and the going of generations." Even in decay, the ghostly outline of an ancient pine stump conjured up "the majesty of its original grandeur." While these elements of

11Ibid.
the environment changed with the seasons and aged with time, "Dame Nature" was portrayed as a wise old lady who never grew older.12

The dame's ageless beauty also seduced lovers of nature. The Rickers' public infatuation commenced with the opening of the Poland Spring House in 1876. With dozens more rooms to fill now, publicists highlighted the natural attractions of the hilltop. A pamphlet promoting the hotel during its inaugural season proclaimed that the building overlooked "the best scenery in New England." After touring the new facility, a reporter for the Lewiston Evening Journal agreed that the views were of the "very finest order." The site, he wrote, commanded "most sweeping panoramas of ponds, streams, cities, villages and the fresh country side." From the veranda, visitors could see as far as the White Mountains to the northwest and from the top of the hotel's six-story tower, they could see all the way to Casco Bay to the southeast. In back of the building stood a visually pleasing grove of oak and pine that also carried refreshing "out-of-door air" through the corridors of the hotel. Because of these natural attributes, the reporter recommended the resort as the ideal destination "for Lewiston and Auburn folks, hankering for a drive or a day's siesta." Furthermore, he predicted on the eve of the opening of the Poland Spring House that "the

12"Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 8; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 September 1901, 8; "Country Roads," Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 2; "Autumn," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 2.
popularity of the Springs, the beauty of the scenery, [and] the attractiveness of the surrounding pond for fishing" would make the hotel a financial success.13

The variety of ways beauty revealed itself was a prime selling point of the scenery. An 1883 catalog informed readers that they would find a diversified landscape at the resort. In addition to sitting on the veranda and viewing the White Mountains, "seekers of pleasure and health" could boat and fish in the three beautiful Range Ponds, go for "attractive walks" in the pine and oak grove, or take "excellent drives" around "one of the most charming spots in New England." Each of these natural attractions contributed to what the catalogue advertised as the "invigorating atmosphere" of the resort.14

The changing seasons added to the diversity of the natural landscape. The Hill-Top reported that during the summer, splendid sunshine, pure tonic air, fresh breezes, bowing daisies, dreamy blue mountains, and enchanting skies were "among the many joys of beautiful Poland" that might greet "the faithful pilgrim to the Mecca of the Pine Tree State." Autumn brought forth scenes likened to "a picture upon an artist's easel": mountain ranges made clear by the crisp fall air, leaves mingling red with green and brown with

13Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: H. Ricker and Sons, 1876), 3; "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876.

14Poland Mineral Spring Water (1883), 14.
gold, fields punctuated by stacks of corn and piles of pumpkins, and the sky illuminated by the harvest moon. With winter came new "transcendent beauty" for the hardy guests who visited the Mansion House during the off-season to see. Boughs weighed down by snow and branches coated with ice produced a "symphony in white" and reflected "iridescent light."  

The site’s natural beauties also served as the basis for comparisons promoting the resort’s distinctive identity. Part of the broader romantic agenda to invest regions and the new nation with unique identities, the movement was intent upon demonstrating that the landscapes of the New World were at least as scenic, historic, and significant as those found in the Old World, despite their relative lack of antiquity. The earliest comparisons involving Poland Spring laid claim to its preeminence in the constellation of New England tourist attractions. Over time, the points of comparison ranged farther afield and the claims became bolder.16


John Sears has argued that the promotion of tourist landscapes played a central role in fostering the formation of American national identity during the nineteenth century.
By 1887 a pamphlet maintained that the hilltop commanded views of "one of the most beautiful and diversified landscapes" in not only New England, but on the entire American continent. It also favorably compared the Range Ponds to Loch Katrine in Scotland. Many years later, the Hill-Top added the lakes of Ireland and Switzerland to the list of locations the resort's scenery rivaled. For the wife of art photographer Louis Alman, however, the view from the veranda of the Poland Spring House was more reminiscent of an Italian landscape.17

Beauty, either in splendid aesthetic isolation or in self-promotional geographic comparison, was not the sole redeeming quality of nature. To the contrary, the Hill-Top warned in 1894 that man could not "find complete enjoyment ... in feeding the aesthetic sense alone." Instead, the paper touted the therapeutic value of nature in an article revealingly entitled "A Summer Shrine." The piece advised readers that they needed to appease "the cravings of the inner man" and enjoy "every-day comforts" in order to appreciate most keenly the "manifold beauties of nature." The author

Looking at the role a particular region played in this cultural development, Anne Hyde has explored how the distinctive geological features and aesthetic qualities of the West helped distinguish the United States from Europe. In her study of the relationship between tourism and regionalism, Dona Brown has shown how the tourist industry shaped the identity of New England as "an imagined world of pastoral beauty, rural independence, virtuous simplicity, and religious and ethnic homogeneity."

17Poland Spring Hotels (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1887), unpaginated; "View," Hill-Top, 22 July 1900, 1; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 18 July 1897, 6.
recommended carriage rides to Shaker village, Norton Pope’s kennel, and James Sanborn’s stock farm; reading in a shady nook on the veranda of the Poland Spring House; or musing beneath the trees at the spring as ways for guests "to forget the care and turmoil of the outside world, and to study the harmonies of nature."  

Part of nature’s therapeutic value derived from its power to inspire the illusion that humans could separate their inner selves from their worldly concerns and thereby experience complete relaxation. This belief made possible the invitation for guests to exchange "the impediments of daily toil" for "the garb of pleasure pilgrims." "A Summer Shrine" assured the faithful that Nature, in the form of the shady drives, the lily pond, the groves and forest glens, and the symphony of bird song, would add to the "inspiriting restfulness of a sojourn on the Hill."  

Besides its ability to bring about mental well being, nature was believed to be physically beneficial, and not only in the form of mineral water. Few sources failed to link Poland Spring to the healing powers of nature. An 1887 pamphlet promoted the resort as a shrine where patients could receive the remedial ministrations of nature. Several years later, Henry and George Poole pointed to Maine’s "health-giving and restoring climate" as one of the attractions of the

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18 "A Summer Shrine," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 2.
19 Ibid., 1-2.
hilltop. Another history of Poland published in 1890 cited the combination of "the magic virtues of the water, the loveliness of the scenery, and the purity of the air" as additional natural blessings. As for the author of "A Summer Shrine," he prescribed a regimen consisting of drafts of mineral water from bubbling fountains, breaths of the pure air of the hills, and gazes upon "the beauty and grandeur of the surrounding landscape" as the basis for good health. Singling out the fresh country air, an editorial in the Hill-Top in 1897 claimed that its "invigorating effect" made "the weak become strong, and the well, stronger."20

An 1890 Poland Water catalog provided by far the most encompassing and impassioned exposition on the therapeutic value of nature. The promotional piece personified Nature as the benevolent distributor of remedies placed on earth by the Creator. The "marvelous" spring water exemplified how "Nature asserts her greatness and demonstrates by the beneficence of her action, the divinity of her origin." Moderns were scolded for foolishly flinging aside Nature's healing perfumes and pungents, as well as for despising the natural and exalting the artificial. In contrast, the aboriginal "red race" was complimented for its primeval understanding that many remedies were "gifts of the Great Spirit." Patient and constant

20Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; Poole and Poole, History of Poland, 34; Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, Maine (Boston: W. A. Ferguson, 1891), 735; "A Summer Shrine," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 1; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 8.
observation, hereditary knowledge, and the exercise of personal faculties made Indians, the pamphlet contended, "disciples of a true, natural hygiene."21

Right behind the aborigines in their innate appreciation of nature, according to the Hill-Top, were children. Young enough to be not yet completely bound by the conventions of "civilized usage," they, too, approached their natural surroundings with simplicity. For young people, the outdoors was a vast playground where they could splash in puddles, jump from stone to stone, walk upon fence rails, picnic in open air, camp out beneath pines, play house on a rock ledge, and "enjoy their innocent games without fear of molestation or annoyance." As the paper wistfully and nostalgically remarked, "there is a charm about the woods the town can never wholly eradicate, and those who never made mud pies have lost a sweet and simple pleasure of their lives."22

Realizing that most guests had long ago outgrown the ability to appreciate nature's simplicity, the Hill-Top encouraged them to become reacquainted with its solitude. In 1898 an article invited readers to check out a pine grove on the shores of Lower Range Pond "where solitude dwells." "Away from the click of golf clubs, or the clatter of non-desuetudin-

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nous tongues," the paper asserted, quiet reigned as it had since aboriginal times. The fact that the spot had not been despoiled by "obnoxious" pagodas, swings, and merry-go-rounds built by the "improving hand of man" added to its loveliness. The untouched grove remained a place of peacefulness, gentleness, and calm. ²³

The feelings unlocked by nature made the time Holman Day spent on Ricker Hill an occasion of grand solemnity. Imagining himself seated on the veranda of the Poland Spring House, Day painted a verbal portrait of an especially inspiring scene -- a July sunset. Winds wafted across clover blossoms and stirred the oak and maple groves, scenting and vitalizing the heavy summer air. Shadows crept across the ponds and lawns, making the flowers appear spectral and the fountains seem like mist-wraiths. As the sky faded to crimson over the White Mountains, night came placidly to the New England countryside. At such moments, Day observed, Poland Spring was a spot far lovelier than any other on earth. ²⁴

Settings such as a peaceful pine grove or a summer sunset were not only ideal for the therapeutic clearing of the mind, but also for the spiritual cleansing of the soul. Alluding to


²⁴"[Holman Day], "Facts and Fancies at Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 2; "The Hill-Top Twenty-Six Years Ago," Hill-Top, 31 July 1920, 8.

Although "Facts and Fancies" was unattributed at the time of publication, the 1920 article on the history of the Hill-Top credited it to Day.
the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, Day instructed visitors to Ricker Hill to engage in the following ritual:

Place your face to the west and love the Lord. Then drink Poland water. Then contemplate Heaven, descended on earth, and listen to the low sweet communings of Earth and Sky, the droning sounds of Peace and the laughter of happy human souls, and then I should solemnly advise you to drink more Poland water.

Transformation, if not outright transfiguration, were reportedly the rewards that awaited the faithful pleasure pilgrim.25

At the end of the 1894 season, George Haynes contributed an article to the Hill-Top that also explored the spiritual dimension of Poland Spring. To stimulate interest in autumn vacations at the resort, Haynes touched upon the full range of themes that made nature appealing to urban rusticators. The crystal spring, which carried people back in imagination to primitive times, symbolized the permanence of nature. A magnificent panorama, which was "frescoed with colors ever changing and never reproducible," demonstrated the "wild beauty" nature lavished on the "Queen of Resorts." Drinking the "nectar of life" and breathing the pure mountain air, which in combination possessed the power to free weary saints and sinners from the cares and troubles of life and to relax the bonds fettering them to the treadmill of business, exemplified nature's promise of rest, comfort, and health. "The endless variety of scenery," which awakened thoughts of

25"Facts and Fancies," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 2.
the power and grandeur of God's creation and "put new life into the jaded pilgrim," revealed the inspirational value of nature. For Haynes, the presence of "invigorating breezes, pure water and ozone laden with the perfume of fir and balsam" made Poland Spring the "Garden of Eden."26

Descriptions of Poland Spring as a Garden of Eden, paradise, heaven descended on earth, shrine, and "Mecca of many a summer pilgrimage" not only reflected a deep reverence for nature, they also lend some credence to John Sears's thesis that vacationers regarded tourist attractions as sacred places. Comparing secular vacations to holy pilgrimages, Sears has written:

They both promise spiritual renewal through contact with a transcendent reality (the shrine of the saint or the sublime waterfall). Sometimes they offer the hope of physical regeneration as well as through the aid of a sacred or medicinal spring.

This analysis captures the essence of nature's appeal to many of the guests who came to Poland Spring. The scenic and medicinal gifts of nature provided access to a transcendent reality that promised physical regeneration, mental relief, and spiritual renewal.27


Other studies have also noted the tendency of tourists to approach nature as a source of spiritual revitalization or
A fifth major message — the need to conserve nature — emerged very belatedly at Poland Spring during the 1890s. Before that time, the need for conservation amidst apparently inexhaustible abundance had been unthinkable. Then, the tall and straight pines that had made Poland a prime source for mast and spars before the American Revolution had disappeared. By midcentury, even smaller pines suitable for lumber had become scarce. Yet, a prominent resident bemoaned in 1860 not that so much of the local forest had been cut down, rather that the trees had been "almost given away." Similarly, a reporter for the Lewiston Falls Journal lamented: "What mines of wealth they would be if now standing!"

The Rickers' transformation from unabashed exploiters to conscientious conservers of natural resources exemplified the remarkable change in the approach to nature that took place during the last half of the nineteenth century. In the 1850s, Hiram Ricker had sought to make his fortune by harvesting the forests of Western Maine; in 1899, the Hill-Top excoriated the

moral purgation. Grover, for example, has contended that the romantic influence of nature helped visitors to Saratoga absolve "their citified souls."


Wescott has dated the realization that "unbridled exploitation" threatened Maine's natural resources with "irreparable destruction" to the 1850s.
"conscienceless woodsman" for seeing in birches "dressed in pure and almost flawless white . . . the glowing beauties of a fire-log or the slick, slim utility of the modern toothpick." In the early days of the spring's discovery, Hiram Ricker had shown little concern for the ecological consequences when he predicted that the water would be sold until the source ran dry; in 1899, the Hill-Top criticized "the grasping corporations and trusts" that controlled the waters of the Androscoggin River.29

The active involvement of two of Hiram Ricker's sons in the conservation movement further highlighted the family's heightened awareness of nature's limits. Hiram W. Ricker was a member of both the American Forestry Association and the Maine Sportsmen's Fish and Game Association. His participation in the latter organization may explain why in 1895 the Hill-Top praised the state for the "wisely-protective game laws" that had enabled the deer and caribou population to increase and the moose population to hold steady over the past decade. It may also explain why a 1901 pamphlet mentioned a "tacit understanding" among fishermen at Poland Spring to throw black bass weighing less than a pound and a half back into the Range Ponds.30

29"Country Roads," Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 2; Poland Spring Centennial, 47; "Our Neighboring Cities," Hill-Top, 16 July 1899, 1.

While Hiram saw to the protection of Maine's forests, fish, and game, Edward Ricker focused his attention on the protection of Maine's rivers and lakes. In 1907 he spearheaded the successful effort to stop the Union Water Power Company from drawing down the Rangeley Lakes. Momentum from the "Save-the-Lakes" campaign led to the passage of the Fernald Law two years later. Proposed by the Rickers' political protege and Poland neighbor, Governor Bert Fernald, the law banned the export of hydroelectric power generated in Maine. In the opinion of Lewiston Journal columnist Arthur G. Staples, Edward Ricker was at the forefront of the crusade to prevent "the possible despoilment of Maine by exportation of water power." In a final farewell tribute, Staples eulogized that Ricker's "greatest public service was in his championship of the scenic beauties of Maine and in their preservation."31

Several factors led to the development of this conservation ethic. According to Richard W. Judd, the first was the deeply ingrained legacy of traditional rural culture. Judd


has argued that the citizens of Maine maintained a moral as well as economic bond with the natural world throughout the nineteenth century. The dictates of this culture -- common land use, direct contact with nature, limited technological mediation, small-scale enterprise, and local control -- worked to conserve natural resources by informal means. As large-scale, highly technological corporations entered the picture and threatened to monopolize the state's forests and rivers, many Mainers joined the Rickers in rallying to the cause of formal conservation legislation.32

The second factor was the philosophical and moral appeal of nature, or what Donald J. Pisani has labeled the soft side of the conservation movement. The Rickers entered the debate over the use of Maine's natural resources not only as defenders of rural traditions, but also as promoters of a romantic vision of nature. The belief that nature possessed aesthetic, therapeutic, and spiritual qualities demanded action to ensure that in the process of harvesting trees and harnessing rivers, the woodsman's ax and power company's dams did not damage scenic and recreational landscapes. Consequently, representatives of the tourist industry such as the Rickers emerged as some of the leading proponents of conservation in Maine.33

32 Judd, "Reshaping Maine's Landscape," 180-3.

The third influence on the Rickers was the alternative hard side of conservation. Pisani has argued that the romantic sentiments that flourished after the Civil War gradually coalesced with scientific knowledge to produce the Progressive phase of the movement during the early twentieth century. Christopher S. Beach has placed Edward Ricker at the forefront of the new approach to resource management, which emphasized efficiency and planning. Indeed, Beach has classified Ricker as a full-fledged Progressive conservationist who "believed in the most efficient and most scientific utilization of water resources" and who "endorsed the idea of centralized political power."34

The combination of factors present in the Ricker family's interest in conservation supports Judd's contention that the guiding principle of balanced multiple-use of resources came to predominate in Maine at the turn of the century. Multiple use represented the political compromise forged among defenders of traditional rural culture, leaders in the tourist industry, and heads of large corporations. The compromise worked because it accommodated many competing multiple interests, all of them rooted to some degree in economic self-preservation. In the case of the Rickers, reliance on traditional moral conscientiousness protected their fountain of wealth from overuse. Employment of romantic aesthetic

3Ibid., 340-1; Beach, "Conservation and Legal Politics," 154.
arguments guarded their prized landscape from the inroads of the Portland and Rumford Falls Railroad. Finally, application of Progressive state power saved the Rangeley Lakes, a region the Rickers and many of their guests liked to visit, from the development plans of the Union Water Power Company.35

The multiple factors that influenced the Rickers’ support of the conservation movement reflected their eclectic view of nature. Nature was the wellspring of temporal permanence, aesthetic beauty, therapeutic healthfulness, and spiritual inspiration. Moreover, it was also one of the staples of the resort business. Thus, the family carefully constructed and actively promoted the romantic message back-to-nature enthusiasts longed to hear.


Promoters of Poland Spring employed a variety of media to advance the antimodern message of romantic escape. Newspapers, pamphlets, photographs, paintings, lectures, and poems all carried messages of nature’s manifold virtues. Ironically, the Rickers relied on modern means of mass communication to mediate the antimodern experience of nature. The admixture of commercialism and romanticism added to the vivid contrasts that permeated the resort.

The Hill-Top did much of the work preparing patrons for encounters with nature. According to the paper, the power of

35 Judd, "Reshaping Maine’s Landscape," 180-1.
nature lay in the ability of scenery to activate senses. An editorial suggested, for instance, that what made the day after a period of cloud and mist so perfect was the delight the beauties of nature brought to the senses. While sight was the sense most often used, there were other ways to perceive the surroundings. Patrons could smell the perfume of the pine and hemlock, feel the texture of the ripening berry, hear the twitter of birds, and taste the freshness of the air. The result of these sensory experiences, readers were instructed, was supposed to be the feeling of joy.36

The Rickers also pressed water and hotel catalogs into service to promote the joys of nature. To fill out the 1890 edition of a pamphlet heralding the attractions of Poland Spring, the family called upon William Murray to contribute an essay. Murray brought many years of experience to the project. During the mid 1860s, this Congregationalist minister had begun spending his summers in the Adirondack region of New York. The vacations provided material for stories that first appeared in his local newspaper in Meriden, Connecticut, and later in a book, Adventures in the Wilderness, published in 1869. The outdoor life so appealed to "Adirondack" Murray that he retired from active ministry in 1874 and set out on a new career as a lecturer and writer. Announcements for his most recent travel account, Lake

36"Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 8; "Country Roads," Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 1; "Autumn," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 1; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 September 1901, 8.
Champlain and Its Shores, appeared at the end of two promotional pieces published by Hiram Ricker and Sons in 1890.  

Not surprisingly, the clergyman turned travel writer believed God revealed his divinity through the natural environment. According to Murray, nature, especially unspoiled, primitive wilderness, was the antidote for the ill effects of urban civilization -- overwork, stress, crime, and disease. Wilderness settings provided moments of humor, solitude, and, most therapeutic of all, adventure. Furthermore, the brand of 'muscular Christianity' preached by Murray held that wilderness experience would regenerate the physical, mental, and spiritual health of adventurers.

In his work for the Rickers, Murray demonstrated a far less adventurous conception of nature. His major task was to

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Most of Murray’s essay on the Poland Spring Hotel also appeared unattributed in H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland, 35-9.


Strauss has characterized Murray as someone who paved the way for the reorientation from a culture that valued production and spiritual fulfillment at midcentury to one that valued consumption and therapeutic fulfillment by the end of the nineteenth century. Leisure pursuits such as wilderness vacations exemplified this cultural transformation.
portray the natural surroundings in such a way that they would invite rather than alienate urban rusticators. He primarily did so by persuading readers that the beneficial effects of nature were present in the comfortable setting of a grand hotel. Indicative of his domestication of nature, Murray equated a stay at the resort to "camping out under a roof."³⁹

Murray opened his twelve-page essay by paying homage to nature as a powerfully creative historical force. "She" had moved the primeval rock that formed the noble hilltop, sifted the rich soil that created the primitive forest, and opened the marvelous springs that supplied the lovely Range Ponds. The result, Murray declared, was "a landscape which for variety and loveliness in form, color and contour, stands distinguished even in a region noted for its majestic altitudes, beautiful perspectives, and vast expanses of vision."⁴⁰

To highlight the proximity of the Poland Spring House both physically and aesthetically to nature, Murray emphasized the resort's location. He remarked that the "friendly alliance" between the groves of oak and maple trees and the nearby hotel provided patrons with shade and vitalized air. In addition, Murray noted that siting the structure on a hilltop permitted the free access of hygienic solar rays.


⁴⁰Ibid., 1-2.
Finally, he called attention to the spectacular scenery, inviting guests to view "the vast expanse of country, the clustering farms, the emerald hills, the shining lakes, and those majestic peaks of the White Mountains, behind which the sun sinks from view as a ship disappears, sailing below the horizon in crimson seas."41

To appeal to people with highly refined tastes, Murray compared the experience of nature at Poland Spring to viewing art. While gazing out the large window at the end of the dining room in the Poland Spring House, guests took in a "plate-glass picture" of moving life. Murray reported that "as you eat you look out upon shining lakes and blue skies, green lawns acres in extent, and forest-covered hills, still valleys far below you, and more silent peaks which penetrate the stillness of remoter skies." What distinguished the canvas of God the Artist from those produced by mere mortals was the motion of swaying trees, fluttering leaves, soaring birds, and floating clouds. Relating an anecdote about a celebrated Boston art connoisseur who dismissed such a scene as a "daub," Murray hastened to warn that "Nature's own charming and realistic presence" would be lost on vain individuals and "rich noodles" who could not set aside their overcultivated urban sensibilities.42

41 Ibid., 5-6.
42 Ibid., 8-10.
Like William Murray, George Haynes was a prolific writer who shaped perceptions of the natural landscape during the late nineteenth century for travelers with overcultivated urban sensibilities. In 1891 he helped the Rickers promote their resort by including a five-page spread on Poland Spring in *The Charming Inland Retreats of Maine*. The site's "grand mountain, forest, and lake scenery" typified the natural landscape that Haynes contended "develops the love of the beautiful, refines the taste, and cultivates the imagination." An illustration of the hilltop from the vantage point of White Oak Hill provided readers with a glimpse of the natural beauties whose charms led Haynes to judge the resort one of the most prominent in the nation.²

Five years later, the site still looked like a "veritable paradise" to Haynes. In a talk presented to the Maine Genealogical Society, he mentioned the expansive grounds, sloping lawns, flower beds, forest groves, and lovely ponds as elements that made up the "picturesque hill farm." In addition, he praised the Rickers for improving their "princely domain" with rare skill and taste. The family's "pious" efforts to preserve and foster the natural beauty of the

hilltop, Haynes maintained, had made Poland Spring "one of the most enchanting spots in all picturesque New England."

The development of photography and advances in printing during the nineteenth century made it possible to supplement the literary descriptions of nature by the likes of Murray and Haynes with actual visual representations. In their earliest promotional pamphlets, the Rickers had relied on engravings to depict the landscape. The 1879 edition, for example, featured a scene of guests resting in the grove at the Spring House and strolling, horse-back riding, and traveling by coach along the tree-lined drive to the Poland Spring House. By 1887 engravings of both drawings and photographs illustrated the steam launch sailing on Middle Range Pond, guests rowing on Lower Range Pond, the oak grove standing behind the Poland Spring House, and a couple wandering on a forest path. The lavishly illustrated 1890 water pamphlet symbolized the transition from landscape painting to landscape photography through the use of a vignette that framed a view of the countryside lying between White Oak Hill and Ricker Hill. In the lower left-hand corner

"George H. Haynes, "Ricker Family and Poland Spring," Portland, Maine, 21 October 1896, TMs, photocopy, 7-8, Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME.

Haynes largely lifted his remarks to the Genealogical Society verbatim from William Murray's 1890 essay on the Poland Spring Hotel and from pages sixty-eight and sixty-nine of Poland Spring Centennial. Given his background as a travel writer, it is possible Haynes had a hand in preparing the latter work.
of the frame appeared a drawing of an easel and a partially painted canvas leaning against a camera."

The Hill-Top frequently combined pictures with words to present inviting scenes to readers. A photograph of a country road in the vicinity of the nearby Shaker village summoned up a cornucopia of verbal images of nature: the dancing shadows of the playful sun, the whirring wings of a frightened partridge, the clear waters of a purling brook, the nodding caps of tiger lilies, the sere and yellow hues of the autumn woods, and the clear crisp breath of mountain air. Another photograph, this one of the Range Ponds, served as a reminder of the many sights visible from Ricker Hill. The accompanying article concluded with the poetic couplet: "Ever charming, ever new// When will the landscape tire the view?"

Not soon, apparently, for the next week a picture of a sunset graced the front page of the Hill-Top. The paper used the illustration to explain the advantage photography had over the media of writing and painting. Quoting the renowned English art critic, John Ruskin, the article asserted that a sunset produced "colors for which there are no words in the language and no ideas in the mind, -- things which can only be conceived while they are visible." Therein lay part of the

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"Poland Mineral Spring Water (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, [1879]), 3; Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; Poland Spring Water (1890), unpaginated.

camera's power. Like the eye, it witnessed, rather than imagined, the visible. Moreover, the new technology enabled photographers to record the instantaneous moment. This was a critical factor given the observation by the article that nature did not hold its pictures steady for an instant "in fear some mortal would successfully reproduce it." Because nature was fleeting, no artist could do "perfect justice" to a Poland Spring sunset. The great English landscape painter, Joseph M. Turner, who only feebly reproduced the crimson, golden, and purple tinged "kaleidoscopic combination of western clouds and low disappearing sun," could not and neither could his contemporary and countryman, William Hunt, whose palette and brush could not equal "the pictures painted by the Master hand upon the western sky." The virtually instantaneous camera, however, now allowed the domesticators of nature to control and reconstruct scenes of nature in ways previously unavailable to the masters."

Although admittedly limited in its power to depict nature, art supplied many metaphors used by promoters of the resort to describe nature. An article in the Hill-Top, for example, likened the panorama encircling Ricker Hill to a "canvas for the sky to paint its picture on." Other pieces in the periodical mentioned features of the landscape in terms of their artistic merit. In "A Summer Shrine," the writer

speculated that the placid ponds, country homes, hillside fields and forests, and grand old White Mountains made for a "perpetual feast of beauty" that might inspire a painter. Yet another article in the paper added the "groves of fragrant pine" and "living pearly stream" at Poland Spring to the list of subjects worthy of an artist's consideration."

The editors of the Hill-Top freely associated art and nature because of their belief in the symbiotic relationship between the two. In an 1896 editorial, they explained that Nature instilled a love of Art and Art, whether photographic or impressionistic, recorded "Nature, true Nature." The approximation to authenticity was measured by the artist's ability to record the entire range of sensory experience. It was not enough to see nature in art, viewers also had to feel emotions such as peacefulness. Reflecting the marriage of message and medium, the editorial concluded with the slogans: "Nature and Art. Art and Nature. Life companions. Forever hand in hand.""

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""Summer Shrine," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 1-2; "Facts and Fancies," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 2; "Perfect Poland," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 2.


Miller has referred to the relationship between art, especially landscape painting, and nature that developed during the mid nineteenth century as the aesthetic proprietorship of nature. What artists staked out with canvas and brush, the Hill-Top claimed with paper and pen.
Guests could admire the companions in the art gallery that opened at the resort in 1895. The Hill-Top invited weary guests to view the many images of "the sea, the sky, the flowers, the fruit, the woods, the shaded path" and other thoughts depicted by artists. The reward for feeding the "inner sense" in this way, the periodical advised, would be "calm repose." To reinforce the point, the paper told the story of a "delightful gentleman" who owed his serenity and equanimity to depictions of nature. Pictures of a delightful woodland, babbling brook, and "realistic representation of an Alaskan glacier" decorated his office. At home, works by the old masters and scenes of suffering represented in storms and shipwrecks, as well as battles and strife, were replaced by "nature's pleasing subjects."

One of the artists who most successfully brought the pleasing subjects to Poland Spring was John Enneking. Considered by many authorities to be one of the leading American painters of the day, Enneking had served as a juror for the fine arts exhibit at the World's Columbian Exposition. The eight pictures he sent in 1895 for the inaugural exhibition at the resort surveyed the landscape of New England from a spring morning in Skowhegan, Maine, to a cloudy day in North Bridgton, Maine, to summer twilight in Winthrop, Massachusetts. The Hill-Top admired the genius of an artist who had perfected

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"Perfect Poland," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 2; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 28 July 1901, 8.
the authentic re-creation of nature. Enneking's study of subjects was so close, skill with the brush so masterful, fidelity to the principles of art so true, and ability to evoke the full range of sensory experiences so acute that viewers reportedly could "feel the grandeur," "breathe in the cooling atmosphere," see the "rich, mellow glow," and bask in the "warmth and cheerfulness" radiated by his scenes.51

Some of the lecturers who spoke at Poland Spring gave voice to the scenes of nature recorded by photographers and painters. One of the era's most acclaimed oratorical interpreters of nature, Edward C. Swett, came to the resort in 1897 to deliver his highly regarded presentation on "Picturesque Maine." Using 125 lime-light pictures, Swett took a large and attentive audience on an illustrated "flying" tour of the state's mountains, woods, shores, homes, and hotels. His commanding presence, resonant voice, clear delivery, distinct and graceful manner, and interesting views made a fine impression on those who filled the music room of the Poland Spring House.52

The following season an equally esteemed landscape lecturer visited the resort, Henry G. Peabody of Boston. At


52"Picturesque Maine," Hill-Top, 25 July 1897, 4; "Tuesday Evening, August 5th," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 5; "Picturesque Maine," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 9.
the beginning of August, Peabody gave a "beautifully illustrated and well-delivered" talk entitled "Tour of the White Mountains." He then headed off to the hotels of the very same region for a monthlong series of lectures. At the beginning of September, Peabody returned to the hilltop to present "Along the New England Seashore," a program that featured not only "the finest views of any lecturer before the public today," but also "some fine views of Poland Spring."  

Other admirers of nature used poetry as their medium of expression. At Poland's centennial celebration in 1895, the Rev. J. Albert Libby invited visitors to surmount "the lofty domes" of the Poland Spring House:

And look away to far Mount Washington,
Whose shoulders oft the clouds come down upon;
See all the mountains piled apart, and large,
Mount Pleasant, and beyond, old Kearsarge;
Bold Streaked, nearer, on the right looks down;
On all the parts that make up Hebron Town.

Alluding to the Range Ponds in the foreground of this panoramic vista, Libby continued:

Below, as well as from our many hills,
Surpassing beauty all the vision fills,
Their lovely water sheet the sight will please,
A mirror for the clouds and towering trees.

The poet pastor also called upon the townspeople to sing the praises of the health-giving water of Poland Spring.

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53Hill-Top, 7 August 1898, 12; Hill-Top, 11 September 1898, 4.

Because of the resplendent surroundings nature had bestowed upon the town, Louise M. Waterhouse referred to Poland as "a Switzerland of America" in the poem she wrote for the centennial. Among the resort's natural attractions noted in "Greeting to Poland" were the smiling ponds, stately hilltop, healing spring, and lordly grove. Waterhouse concluded the tribute with the declaration:

Then hail to Poland, whose grand scenery fills
   Each son and daughter with a filial pride!
Dear to each heart are all her rocks and rills,
   Long may her honor in each heart abide!

No antimodern romantic, however, Waterhouse prefaced the verse by calling upon her hometown to "be strong and fearless -- true as steel,//In the front ranks of Progress always found."55

The Means: Nature and Ricker, A Firm All-Powerful

Befitting people committed to being in the front ranks of progress, the Rickers furnished the most modern means to experience nature in addition to the most modern forms of media to promote nature. Guests rode through the countryside in finely crafted coaches, observed panoramas from solidly constructed verandas, walked the grounds on well-engineered paths, sailed the ponds in the steam-powered launch, and admired plants and flowers in the state-of-the-art greenhouse. The Hill-Top was quite aware of the part promotional material

55Louise M. Waterhouse, "Greeting to Poland," in Ibid., 50-1.
published by Hiram Ricker and Sons played in constructing visitors' perceptions of nature. It also recognized the role the venues provided by the Rickers played in mediating patrons' experience of nature. Commenting in 1895 on the popularity of the Poland Spring resort, the paper observed that "nature has done much, but nature cannot do everything, but when a combination of Nature and Ricker is formed it is a firm all-powerful.""56

The Rickers realized that the mediation of experience began from the moment travelers set foot on the stages that ferried them from Danville Junction to Poland Spring. In the early days of the resort, "execrable" roads made this a "purgatorial journey." Jane Patterson remembered that the bone-rattling passage had required "a large infusion of faith." Despite her best efforts to suffer stoically the "mundane shaking," the trip had only served to remove her "farther and farther from the spiritual realm."57

Understanding that this was no way to introduce visitors to the resort, the Rickers petitioned local authorities to


As the quote suggests, the tourist industry commodified and incorporated nature as thoroughly as any manufacturing industry. For a comparison, see the study of the textile industry's transformation of nature along the Merrimack River during the nineteenth century by Theodore Steinberg, Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

build an improved road to Poland Spring in 1886. The county of Androscoggin, city of Auburn, and towns of New Gloucester and Poland expended over $5000 on the project, which reduced traveling time via stage by twenty minutes. More importantly, smoothing out the jolting journey permitted stage passengers such as Patterson to enjoy the elixir of the country air free from "the shocks of the stony way." 58

To make the trip even more comfortable, the Rickers also replaced "the cumbrous hot and stuffy vehicle of former days" with "the high-seated, spacious, easy-riding Poland wagon," either a Concord or Tally-Ho coach pulled by a team of four to six "sleek, plump, well-fed, well-groomed" horses. Charles Nevens was the well-seasoned driver. He had operated the stage since 1876, although the Rickers had become increasingly involved in the operation of the line after the Danville Junction depot opened in 1886. Dissatisfied with the service Nevens had been providing in recent years, the Rickers finally bought him out in 1894. 59

The Rickers paid such close attention to the stage service because they knew it offered visitors their initial impression of the natural landscape. Since the coach ride,

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58 "Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 335, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME; Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 80.

59 "The Drive to Poland," Hill–Top, 8 July 1900, 1; Poland Spring Centennial, 70; Poland Spring Water, unpaginated; "Hearing on Petition," 169, 196, 210.
unlike the train trip, proceeded "without the arrow-like velocity," riders had time to fill their lungs with the pure air and ozone of the hill country, an experience sure to result in "a feeling of exhilaration and delight." The more leisurely pace of the stage might also overwhelm passengers with "the desire to chat and laugh . . . as if unable to contain the joy the swift unrolling picture has produced."

The coaches passed through a rich landscape that showed off the many beauties of the Maine countryside. Against this backdrop, publicists described the nearly hour-long journey in idyllic terms. After leaving the "thrifty little village" of Danville, passengers watched scenes of leafy lanes, ponds gemmed by lily pads, and sweet, cool mists hovering over hollows roll past the stage windows. Nearing the end of the narrow and winding main road, they caught the first glimpse of the towers of the Poland Spring House "rising like castle turrets above the trees." Once the gatekeeper admitted the stage onto the resort grounds, it began the mile-long ascent of Ricker Hill, wending its way through deep woods, over bridge and culvert, around corners, past birch-bark Indian camps, and up to the Spring House. There the driver might stop to allow an attendant to supply the riders with a

"The Drive to Poland," Hill-Top, 8 July 1900, 1-2.

Brown has pointed out the importance of stagecoach rides in framing the experience of nature for tourists in Dona L. Brown, "The Tourist's New England: Creating an Industry, 1820-1900," (Ph. D. diss., University of Massachusetts, 1989), 64.
refreshing glass of sparkling water. A few moments later and a thousand feet farther, the long journey ended as driver Nevens halted the team in front of the hotel. If promoters of the resort had done their job well, the "exhilarating ride over a picturesquely undulating country" should have been a "pleasurable experience" that left passengers "beatifically translated."6

Once guests had settled in at the resort, carriage rides through the surrounding countryside could produce effects similar to those experienced on the stage ride. In 1894 the Hill-Top recounted what it described as "that exhilaration of feeling that always accompanies a ride on a brake." Setting out first for White Oak Hill, the "merry" party enjoyed the scenery and landscape on the road to Pope's kennel. At the next stop, the Lower Village of New Gloucester, "a broad expanse of meadow land" unfolded before the passengers. Passing over shady roads to Upper Gloucester, the group headed for the remains of an old saw mill, where "the grand sight" of "the sparkling water" cascading over "the beautiful falls" held everyone spell-bound. "After tearing themselves away from this inspiring spot," the members of the party made their way to Bald Hill, where another spell-binding sight awaited them. As the carriage reached the crest of the hill, "the setting sun hanging in the heavens like a huge ball of fire"

6"Poland Spring, the Paradise of New England," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6; Poland Spring Centennial, 70; "The Drive to Poland," Hill-Top, 8 July 1900, 2.
began its slow descent behind Mount Washington. The ideal and enjoyable afternoon concluded with passage through "shady woods and picturesque valleys" on the way back to the Poland Spring House.\textsuperscript{62}

At the hotel, the veranda provided an ideal vantage point from which to take in a delightful view -- a consideration that the Hill-Top pointed out was "a most essential factor in connection with the summer outing." In the immediate vicinity of the hilltop, a diversified and charming landscape rolled in receding waves toward the White Mountains. To the north, the pine-covered Oxford Hills stood as a reminder of "the rugged mental timber" the region had produced in the likes of the family of Janette Bolster. Tucked within the hills were scores of lakes, including the three Range Ponds. The eastern foothills, similar to the larger neighbors behind them, exhibited "dignity and rugged grandeur." On the distant horizon, the peaks of the Presidential Range appeared like the "jagged teeth of a giant saw."\textsuperscript{63}

In a letter written to the Hill-Top in July of 1899, a recent guest from East Sumner, Maine, shared his impressions

\begin{quote}

\textsuperscript{63} "The Top," \textit{Hill-Top}, 21 August 1898, 2.
\end{quote}

of the view from the veranda. "Slocum" admired the grandeur of the beautiful scenery visible from the west side of the Poland Spring House. So, too, had a well-traveled man the letter writer had met on the veranda. In part because of the "beauty, grandeur, and diversity of scenery," the acquaintance had considered the Poland Spring resort unequalled in attractiveness."

Miles of walkways awaited those guests who preferred ambulatory rather than vehicular or sedentary encounters with nature. The Hill-Top touted the path from the bottling plant to Lower Range Pond as the best route. It terminated at the spot the paper considered the loveliest at the resort -- a shoreside pine grove made all the more accommodating by the presence of benches. Another popular walk was one "no well-regulated summer resort would think of existing without" -- lovers' lane. Located in the vicinity of the spring, "the long shady path" featured seats at regular intervals. At these secluded rest stops, the "summer man" could whisper "soft nothings" to the "summer girl" in privacy, making the woods a truly romantic paradise indeed."

The man largely responsible for the network of pathways on the hilltop was civil engineer and man of progress Edward Jordan. Following his successful design of the resort's

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""Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 18 August 1895, 5; Hill-Top, 7 August 1898, 12; E. L. J., "Lovers' Lane," Hill-Top, 29 July 1894, 6.

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"unequalled facilities for drainage," Jordan's next assignment in the construction of the city of vivid contrasts was to prepare "a plan for the development of Poland Spring property by means of paths and trees." Guided by the tastes and desires of guests for restful and healthful settings, he planned a parklike landscape, a map of which appeared in the 1887 pamphlet for the Poland Spring Hotel. Jordan intended for the promenades running between buildings and the walks wending their way through the woods to heighten the attractiveness of the hilltop and bring guests into closer contact with the natural surroundings. In effect, he intended to engineer the experience of nature.66

One unnamed visitor to the resort encouraged guests to use the paths to study the local bird population. Trained on the teachings of Alexander Wilson and John Burroughs, the amateur ornithologist hoped to awaken "love for the birds." In the process, he also hoped to foster an appreciation for "the rich and beautiful world about us," as well as for the paradise that was Poland Spring. To get the uninitiated and unobservant started, the Hill-Top published a list of forty-five birds that inhabited the woods, fields, and ponds within a ten-minute walk of the hilltop.67

66 Poland Spring Hotels (1887), unpaginated; "Hearing on Petition," 107, 132, 144-5, 309, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME.

When the birds ended their courtship rituals with the arrival of midsummer, the ornithologist metamorphosed into an entomologist in pursuit of butterflies. Although not as endearing as birds, the colorful insects still added "much of beauty and joy to the lover of 'meadow, grove and stream.'" Furnishing guests with detailed descriptions of fourteen kinds of butterfly and pointing them toward places "where the sun shines and flowers are plenty," the Hill-Top advised enthusiasts to revel in the simple joy and pure delight of nature study.68

The Rickers employed three to five gardeners who made sure the butterflies had plenty of flowers upon which to alight. In addition, the groundskeepers groomed the paths, cut the grass, and managed the greenhouse for the benefit of nature-starved guests. Built during the winter of 1896-7, the greenhouse measured 113-feet long by 20-feet wide. Inside the heated structure contained five hot beds, a potting room with a capacity of ten thousand flower pots, and a conservatory open for public viewing. The facility supplied seedlings for the farm, plants for the ornamental gardens, and flowers for the hotels. Colorful roses and carnations found their way into urns, rockeries, and decorative beds that adorned the

For more on the late-nineteenth-century passion for bird watching, see Schmitt, Back to Nature, 33-44.

extensive lawns, as well as into vases that brightened tables in the dining halls."

The Rickers provided guests with the means to enjoy the ponds as well as the grounds. In 1894 the family acquired a steam launch to ply the waters it controlled by virtue of exclusive navigation rights granted by the State Legislature. Purchased from the Shipman Engine Company of Boston, the Poland weighed over six tons, measured thirty feet in length, and had a capacity of twenty people, although the first time the limit was tested by the well-fed patrons of the resort, the vessel ran aground. As the boat made the rounds of Middle and Upper Range Ponds twice daily, passengers took in the beauties of nature and drank in the "elixir of life" -- "the bracing air.""

The ponds were the focus of the most extreme manifestation of the combination between Nature and the Rickers. "Dame Nature," the Hill-Top reported, had supplied the ponds with "a generous and unfailing supply" of water, a setting of "absolute solitude," and scenery that gratified the eye. The Rickers had done their part, too. They had promoted the

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"Poland Facts," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 1; "The Conservatory," Hill-Top, 18 July 1897, 1-2; Souvenir List of Employees (Poland Spring, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1900), unpaginated; Poland Spring House (1901), unpaginated.

message that the ponds were lovely and charming through pamphlets, periodicals, photographs, and poems. They had also provided the means to appreciate the ponds -- sail boats, canoes, and the steam launch. Yet, something was still lacking."

The editors of the Hill-Top finally solved the mystery in 1903. The Range Ponds were "orphans." The transformation of the three foundlings into more fully developed natural attractions began with new names. Upper Range Pond became Lake Edward; Middle Range became Lake Alvan; and Lower Range became Lake Hiram. In addition, the paper assigned the lakes individual characteristics tied to the recreational and natural landscapes emphasized at the resort. Lake Edward boasted sportive bass; Lake Alvan claimed the sail and oars; while Lake Hiram mirrored wooded shores. An illustrated article in the paper publicized the makeover by reminding readers of "the value of water in a landscape." Unspoken yet understood was the certainty that this value was not only aesthetic, therapeutic, and spiritual, but economic as well."

The Reception: "These Passionate Lovers of Nature"

Given the array of media employed by publicists of Poland Spring -- newspapers, pamphlets, photographs, paintings, lec-
tures, and poems -- and the vast amount of promotional material produced, guests could hardly have missed the message that nature was permanent, beautiful, healthy, and inspiring. They certainly made use of the means made available by the Rickers to experience nature at Poland Spring. Written accounts and illustrations show that the coaches, carriages, and steam launch were well traveled, the veranda and groves well populated; and the paths and walks well worn. Although precisely what the vast majority of vacationers were thinking while they toured the countryside, viewed the mountain ranges, surveyed the grounds, ambled through the woods, and cruised the ponds is largely unknown, scattered evidence indicates that patrons of the resort did admire the permanence and beauty of the landscape and did believe that it produced the restful, healthful, and spiritual qualities they sought in a middle landscape.

The Romance of the New Bethesda by Jane Patterson provides the most extensive insight into how a guest experienced nature at Poland Spring. Patterson based the novel on the impressions she had formed over the course of many summers spent on Ricker Hill during the 1870s and 80s. As the story opens, the year is 1873. The Raynors have gone on vacation because Charles, who is a lawyer, has overworked himself to the point of near death. The couple is about to disembark from the train that has brought them from their home in Pennsylvania to their refuge in Maine.
When Catharine Raynor takes her first look around, she is startled to discover that she has landed in a wilderness, not in "some lovely and cultivated portion" of the state as she had expected. Her husband attempts to set her mind at ease by assuring her that the resort is still another four to five miles from the railroad station. Once the couple reaches the hotel and settles in, the effects of nature are felt almost immediately. Kate takes in a magnificent sunset, which begins to relax her heart and mind. The next morning, Charles feasts his eyes on lovely mountain scenery, which helps to make him feel contented.73

In the days and weeks to come, the Raynors enjoy the benefits brought about by many other encounters with nature. During a nap on a hammock strung up in the pine woods, Charles breathes the soothing air and experiences the quiet, which calms his nerves. Kate admires the picturesqueness of the place, which relieves her cares and anxieties. On a walk along the path to the spring, the Raynors revel in "the beauty of the sylvan solitude," gather plants, and climb from rock to rock, which rekindles in the couple "the invigorating pulse of youth."74

With summer and their time at the resort both drawing to an end, the Raynors add one last picture "to the rich mental gallery which this region had photographed." On their return

73 Patterson, Romance of the New Bethesda, 7-14.
74 Ibid., 18-21, 34.
from the spring one day, the couple decides to stray from the tree-sheltered paths and venture instead through the tangles of the unexplored forest. Along the way, the two lovingly gather specimens of beautiful mosses and vines to bring home to their children. No sound disturbs them; not so much as the chirp of a bird or the buzz of an insect is heard. The Raynors become "so attuned to the harmonies of the universe by their harmony with each other and with God that all things vocal and inanimate served their will and wish."\(^{75}\)

In 1881 the Raynors decide once again that they need to get away from the routines of home. On top of the sweltering summer heat, the strain of having her first-born child, Alex, leave the nest has wearied Kate Raynor. Charles's prescription is a change of scenery for the whole family -- a vacation at New Bethesda. A bout of camp fever that afflicts the couple's two eldest unmarried sons, Richmond and Willie, derails the plan slightly. The parents accede to the pleas of the boys who instead head off to the Adirondacks to spend the summer camping with a group of college students. Meanwhile, the remaining members of the family continue on to Maine. Once Mr. and Mrs. Raynor, daughter Maud, and youngest son Fred arrive at the resort, Dr. Rossville, the proprietor, assures them that they have made the better choice. Dismissing the Adirondacks as "all talk" and nothing but common lake water and woods, Rossville tells his guests: "you have the woods

\(^{75}\)Ibid., 69-70, 74.
here, and the lakes, and water that will cure all the sick, and keep the well from getting sick."76

Mr. and Mrs. Raynor would not regret their decision. The first day at New Bethesda for "these passionate lovers of Nature" draws to an end with a magnificent sunset. Retiring to the veranda after dinner, they find the western horizon aglow with light, the clouds tinted with entrancing colors, the hills reflecting the pageantry in the sky, and the ponds mirroring the wonders above. As the Raynors watch the scene in rapt awe, they realize the insignificance of "the ambitions and the employments which possess our little earth, when compared with the glory of the heavens." It is for the couple a moment of transfiguration. For a while, they are able to transcend via nature the troubles of the mundane world for the tranquility of a spiritual realm.77

In 1885 Charles and Catharine Raynor make their fourth trip to the resort. They have chosen not to follow Willie and Fred to Chautauqua, New York, preferring rest to "the crowds, the rush, and the hurry." Their decision has also been influenced by Maud, who has persuaded her parents that a visit to New Bethesda would be more refreshing than a vacation in the Scottish lake country and travel through Europe.78

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76Ibid., 174-80.
77Ibid., 184-5.
78Ibid., 259-61.
One day during their stay, Mr. and Mrs. Raynor come across a photographer whom Dr. Rossville has hired to show the world the "restful and invigorating place." Offering a rationale for the incessant promotion of nature, Charles explains to his wife that people need to see that New Bethesda offers the "beautiful setting of lakes and hills" in addition to the spring. He adds that new guests also need to be prepared for what they will find upon their arrival. To emphasize the point, Charles relates the story of a visitor who found the surprise of "charming natural scenery" and "an enchanting panorama" too overwhelming for his tired nerves.79

Patterson concluded the novel by affirming the permanence, beauty, healthfulness, and spirituality of nature. As summer warmth gives way to fall frosts, yet another season at New Bethesda draws to a close for the Raynors. The change of seasons cannot "obliterate the handwriting of Providence" on the hill country, however, for the divine presence in nature is enduring. Natural beauty will continue to brood above the heights and healing water will continue to flow beneath the ground. Patterson believed that those people who obeyed the call of the Eternal Voice to come up to the higher place symbolized by New Bethesda would gain access not only to "the elixir in rarefied air," but more importantly to God's redemptive power.80

79Ibid., 279-80.
80Ibid., 308-9.
The glowing accounts of Poland Spring by Jane and the Rev. A. J. Patterson persuaded at least one of their acquaintances to check out the resort — the Rev. T. A. Dwyer. The pastor from Hyde Park, Massachusetts, visited Ricker Hill for the first time in late July of 1896. During his three-week stay, Dwyer received a letter from his clerical colleague who was vacationing that summer at the Isles of Shoals off the coast of New Hampshire. Patterson asked Dwyer to remember him to the Ricker brothers and urged his friend to partake of the healing virtues of the spring daily. When he was not admiring the beauty of the resort or imbibing the water from the spring, Dwyer preached sermons and delivered lectures to his fellow guests.¹¹

Dwyer's recollections of the resort opened with his impression of a first-time visitor's stage ride from Danville Junction to Poland Spring. The minister imagined that the stranger would exclaim "Beautiful! beautiful" as he traveled the route. The encircling mountains would make him feel as though he were within a fortification that shut out both "the busy noises of the world" and "the bustle and hum of business life." The sight of girdling landscape and sounds of sweet-

¹¹T. A. Dwyer, "Recollections of My First Visit to Poland Springs," Hill-Top, 30 August 1896, 4-5; "Sunday Services, Hill-Top, 2 August 1896, 5; "Sunday Services, Hill-Top, 9 August 1896, 3.
singing birds would suggest to the traveler the possibility of complete rest.\textsuperscript{2}

According to Dwyer, nature could also inspire spiritual transformation. One of the most glorious moments during his vacation was an evening when the soft glows of the setting sun bathed the surrounding hills with a radiant splendor and flushed a nearby pond with reddened light. This self-described lover of nature recalled that "it was the sort of scene in which one could most readily forget his own existence and feel melted into the general life of God's creation." Dwyer concluded his thoughts about all the "dreamy delights" he viewed from the hilltop with several lines from an Irish poem:

\begin{quote}
In that Eden of the West
Angels fold their wings to rest.
Angels often wandering there
Doubt if Eden were more fair.
\end{quote}

Another urban rusticator had found paradise at Poland Spring.\textsuperscript{3}

One did not have to be a minister to see a divine hand in nature. In 1889 General Benjamin Butler told a reporter from the Lewiston newspaper that he liked the resort because it presented "God's earth just as God made it." Besides admiring

\textsuperscript{2}Dwyer, "Recollections," \textit{Hill-Top}, 30 August 1896, 4.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.

The poem Dwyer quoted from was "The Vale of Avoca" by Tom Moore.
the permanence of natural creation, Butler loved its beauty and championed its healthfulness. From his seat on the west veranda of the Poland Spring House, Butler could see the best of both the mountains, "symbolic of purity and peace," and the countryside, "the spot favored of the Creator in summer." Citing the healing power of the water and the quietude of the setting, Butler applauded Poland Spring as "the resort of men and women who need rest, comfort and renewed strength."**

Several years later, a broker from New York City shared similar thoughts about the appeal of Poland Spring with the same reporter. For this guest, having "things of beauty to look upon" helped to make the resort a place of restfulness. He confessed that the site's good scenery, described by the journalist as the sun-tipped heights of mountains, glistening chain of ponds, beautiful slopes of hills, and yellow patches of grain, helped to rid him of evil. The tired worker who came to the hilltop left as a new man.**

For Helen C. Weld of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, the experience of nature at the resort inspired feelings of joy and fun, rather than a sense of purification or revitalization. Weld and her companions, Mrs. Rand and Miss Bumstead, availed themselves of several of the means provided by the Rickers to gain an appreciation of the natural surroundings.


**Ibid."
Late in the summer of 1891, they walked to the Spring House and took in the beautiful view, followed "a pretty woody path to one of the line of lakes," and went on a "lovely drive" to Pope's kennel and the Shaker settlement. At the conclusion of her two-day stay, Weld recorded in her diary that she had enjoyed her time at Poland Spring immensely."

Another weary worker who ventured to the resort for revitalization was Terence P. McGowan, publisher of the Board of Trade Journal and agent for the Trans-Atlantic Steamship Company. During the summer of 1899, the resident of Portland, Maine, gladly quit the hot and crowded city and headed for the cool and refreshing hilltop to be with "the representative families and men of the nation." Based upon his experiences at Poland Spring, he concluded that nature had lavished this region of "the dear old 'Pine Tree State'" with many gifts, including the life-restoring elixir, lofty pines, a picturesque countryside, and beautiful panoramas. The means the Rickers provided to enjoy these natural assets -- palatial well-equipped hotels and splendid well-constructed carriages -- made the site, in McGowan's estimation, an ideal resort."

The beauties of nature also made Poland Spring an ideal resort for someone who went only by the initials A. H. H.

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"Helen C. Weld, Diary, Jamaica Plain, MA, 15-17 September 1891, DeWolfe and Wood, Alfred, ME.

This guest likened the landscape to "living pictures, whose color, beauty and action vie with the superb canvases contributed by art." In addition to seeing the beauty, this patron heard the poetry of Poland Spring during drives through the countryside, strolls across the lawns, rambles in the groves, and boat rides on the ponds. Such encounters with nature invited and warned "busy, restless humankind to be still -- to obey the passionate longing for silence and repose, and gather vital force for a later season."

An even more anonymous visitor to Poland Spring actually set the poetry of the natural surroundings to verse. In the opening stanzas of "To Poland Spring," the poet listed the reasons for traveling to the resort:

To breathe fresh air,
And drink pure water,
A place to rest,
Is what we're after.

O, Poland Spring,
We come to thee;
Place of all places,
From care free.

The poem continued by highlighting some of the activities guests engaged in once there:

We view for miles
The beauties round,
And wander through
Thy spacious grounds.


A. H. H. may have been A. Hurlburt who contributed the article "June Days" to the first issue of the Hill-Top during the 1897 season.
The tribute closed with a toast:

Nature's done so much for thee,
Fair Poland Spring;
And thou in turn dost much for me.
We drink to thy prosperity."

The poem summarized the contributions nature made to the success of the resort. It created the beauties that made fair Poland Spring aesthetically pleasing and it supplied the fresh air, pure water, and peaceful atmosphere that made the site therapeutically beneficial. What the Rickers added to the partnership with nature was the insight to conceive of these natural attributes as marketable commodities, the skill to manage and promote these commodities, and the determination to preserve them from industrial exploitation, when this suited their interests. As Lida Churchill summed up the situation, Nature had "poured out its treasures as clouds pour out rain," but the Rickers had given the resort its soul."

Looking back in 1923 at the resort the Rickers had built on the hilltop, Arthur Staples credited them with having created an Eden out of a country farm. They had shaped the rural setting of Poland Spring into a middle landscape that appealed to their urban clientele's desire to return to nature without forsaking the comforts of modernity. They had then fought to protect the quality of the landscape and the outdoor

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"To Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 22 August 1897, 18.

"Poland Spring," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 2.
experience from the inroads of industrial concerns. They had interpreted this experience into the message that nature offered the benefits of temporal permanence, aesthetic beauty, therapeutic healthfulness, and spiritual inspiration. They had promoted this message through the media of periodicals, pamphlets, paintings, photographs, lectures, and poems. Finally, the Rickers had made available to guests the means to enjoy nature: wilderness trips, carriages, verandas, foot paths, boardwalks, a greenhouse, a steam boat, as well as a myriad of outdoor recreational activities.91

CHAPTER VIII

THE PLAYING FIELDS: A PICTURESQUE RECREATIONAL LANDSCAPE

In late August of 1899, guests gathered in the music hall of the Poland Spring House to watch the presentation of prizes to the leading golfers at the resort. The ceremony began with remarks by Byron Moulton who recounted for the audience that when he and his wife first visited Poland Spring in 1876, recreation had consisted of a ride on an ox-drawn hayrack. Among the many changes Moulton had seen since that time was the laying out of the "most beautiful golf grounds in the country." The transformation of pasture land into playing fields led Moulton to lay down the hay scythe he had wielded a few summers earlier and to pick up in its place the golf club. The exchange well symbolized the ascendance of a modern leisure ethic at the resort during the late nineteenth century.

At the city of vivid contrasts, the legitimacy of leisure rivaled that of the venerated work ethic. By 1897 the Hill-Top advised readers that the enjoyment of "out-door games" was "the duty of all." To help people fulfill this obligation, the proprietors turned Poland Spring over the course of four decades into a playground where guests could not only golf,

but also fish, boat, bike, and bowl, in addition to play tennis, croquet, and baseball. To the editors of the resort newspaper, the presence of "moving figures in healthful and harmonious recreation" gave "a picturesqueness to the landscape."²

As the comment reveals, the Rickers and their publicists promoted recreation by appealing to both antimodern and modern values. Participation in sports offered opportunities both to restore a harmonious relationship with nature and to improve physical and mental health. These attributes, coupled with the power of sports to invoke nostalgic memories, build individual character, provide therapeutic pleasure, satisfy the need to consume, and confer social status, made recreation an increasingly acceptable pursuit for patrons of the resort.

Most historians link the rising popularity of sports during the nineteenth century to the growth of modern urban centers.³ The wealth, communication networks, and transportation facilities found in cities such as Philadelphia, for example, made possible the formation of organizations such as


the Merion Cricket Club to which Byron Moulton belonged. At the same time, the overcrowding and overwork associated with urban, industrial society made it desirable for people of Moulton's socioeconomic class to escape their problems through the "safety valve" of recreation. Although historians generally agree on the reasons for the upsurge in sports, they have explained its cultural significance in a variety of ways. Some argue that sports supplied vivifying experience as an antidote to urban dullness; some emphasize that they offered order as a cure for urban chaos; some propose that they instilled a sense of community identity as a remedy for urban anonymity; still others maintain that sports provided physical, mental, and even spiritual renewal as a prescription for urban dissipation.

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In 1890 Henry and George Poole attributed the leisure revolution to the taxing nature of contemporary life. The brothers expressed concern that modern Americans were "all vitalness." Their brains were charged like lightning; their bodies were electric; and their pulses never slowed. The fast set, which the Pooles equated with business men, ate too fast, drank too fast, and consequently, died too fast. Most at risk was the Yankee, whom the pair likened to "an arrow in full flight, flying so fast that he sets himself on fire and burns himself into ashes by the fierce rapidity of his own motion."

The Pooles gravely warned: "Our business men must leave their business often or they will soon leave it once and forever."

As salvation from this dismal fate, the brothers recommended outdoor exercise. Exposure to sunshine, starlight, wind, and rain could bring, they advised, "respite from toil, surcease of care and escape from pressure." No healthier place for rest and recreation existed, the Pooles believed, than the countryside. Therefore, they counseled the fast set to find good horses and make haste for country roads where

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H. A. and G. W. Poole, History of Poland: Illustrated Embracing a Period of Over a Century, (Mechanic Falls, ME: Poole Brothers, 1890), 43.
"the blessed memories of early days" would replace the concerns of business.

"Healthful and Harmonious Recreation"

Commentators used one or more of three themes to promote recreation during the late nineteenth century. Striking an antimodern tone, those who emphasized the romantic theme attempted to legitimate leisure by appealing to the contemporary longing for nostalgia and interest in nature. At the opposite end of antimodern-modern spectrum, purveyors of the recreational theme accepted leisure as a necessary part of modern life. In between the poles, promoters of rational recreation, who stressed the physical, psychological, and moral benefits of sport, resorted to arguments that attempted to reconcile the traditional work ethic and the modern leisure ethic.

The Pooles' celebration of the "woody smells, the mossy rocks and old stone fences" demonstrates how promoters of the leisure revolution drew upon romantic images of the countryside to advance the cause of recreation. Such accounts starkly contrasted nostalgia for early days with anxiety over modern times. In addition, publicists pointed out that recreation offered the opportunity to leave behind the artificial world of the city for the natural world of the country. There, people could exchange sedentary life for

strenuous life, therapeutic experience for authentic experience, enervation for revitalization, and chaos for harmony. In essence, romantic recreation promised escape from the perils of progress.9

The traditional field sport of fishing provided the first recreational alternative to ox-cart rides at Poland Spring. As early as 1876, a reporter cited "the attractiveness of the surrounding pond for fishing" as one of the resort's leading assets. The Hill-Top claimed that the fishing at Poland Spring compared favorably to that found at any seaside hotel. For avid anglers such as Byron Moulton, the fine catches of trout and bass available for twenty miles around made the resort a veritable paradise. Moulton went so far as to declare Upper Range Pond "the best fishing ground in the State" after he and Joseph Sawyer hauled in twenty black bass with a combined weight of over forty pounds in two hours during one summer day in 1894.10


The sport owed part of its appeal to nostalgia for a simpler past. Promoters invested fishing with the aura of antiquity by invoking the image of a premodern icon, Isaak Walton. Walton was an Englishman whose 1653 treatise, *The Compleat Angler*, became the bible of the sport. The *Hill-Top* credited Walton with inventing recreational fishing and teaching a philosophy that provided relief "to many a weary brain." In tribute to his enduring influence, the periodical labeled latter-day followers of "the high priest of anglers," Waltonites. The lead disciple at Poland Spring was Moulton's fishing partner, Joseph Sawyer, a man the paper referred to as "our Isaak Walton."11

The religion of "piscatorial enthusiasts" such as Sawyer also drew some of its appeal from the range of experiences provided by the encounter with nature. The reality of fishing included suffering through either soaking rain and wet feet or sweltering sun and blistered skin; pesky mosquitoes, swarming black flies, and smelly tar ointment; cold lunches; and creeping tiredness. As reward for enduring these trials, however, fishermen had the chance to enjoy the contrasting romantic side of angling. The *Hill-Top* vividly described as beautiful and almost poetic the sights and sounds of the sport: "the delicate curve of the slender rod" that produced

"the graceful casting of the fly" and "the gentle hum of the long line," followed by "the noiseless tap" as it hit the water, culminating finally in "the mighty splash" of the victim.\textsuperscript{12}

What began as an antimodern foray into nostalgia, ended as a modern jolt of authentic experience. The scene climaxed in a Darwinian struggle during which the "art and artifice" of the human brain triumphed over the "vacuity" of "the witless denizen of the waters." The ultimate thrill came not from the catch, but instead from the energy that surged through the body of the angler, causing muscles to tense and blood to rush. For those swayed by the Pooles' recommendation to take to country roads, the \textit{Hill-Top} advised: "you get much the same combination of volts in fishing you get in driving a spirited horse."\textsuperscript{13}

The fisherman's boat also inspired romantic sentiments. An 1892 article in the \textit{Lewiston Saturday Journal} observed that a birch canoe on any one of the local lakes floated as "soft on the water as a floating leaf." Two years later, the \textit{Hill-Top} compared the graceful movement of a canoe to dancing to summer music. Furthermore, it likened the exhilaration of drifting in a boat on a placid lake to the feeling of floating between heaven and earth. In contrast to the electric moment

\textsuperscript{12}"Fishing," \textit{Hill-Top}, 15 July 1900, 2.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid}. 

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of landing a fish, which vitalized the body, this was a dreamy experience that touched the soul.\textsuperscript{14}

When boating, unlike angling, the current of romanticism only flowed upstream toward antimodernity. The Hill-Top compared the "poetry of motion" boaters found on Maine's lakes to the "jaunty buoyancy" they faced on the state's wild rivers. The hero of this epic encounter with nature was "the rough Maine woodsman." His steady eye and strong arms enabled him to navigate vessels unharmed through "rolling rapids" and "riotous cataracts." In contrast, the paper maintained that "no human art" could safely pilot modern steamers and cruisers through such hazards.\textsuperscript{15}

During the early 1890s, the bicycle surpassed both the carriage and canoe as the most popular vehicle for flight from modernity. Bicycle production nationwide increased from 40,000 in 1890 to 1.2 million in 1896, while ridership rose from an estimated 150,000 to 4 million. In 1895 Marcia B. Jordan, the wife of the civil engineer who designed the resort's landscape, placed the number of bicycles in Portland at 1200. A year later, the editors of the Hill-Top counted forty bikes at Poland Spring. Noting that the bicycle boom coincided with a period of economic depression and social turmoil in the United States, Richard Harmond has proposed


\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Tbid.}, 2.

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that people turned to cycling as a means to escape the tension and strife of modern life. He has also acknowledged the paradoxical attraction of the bicycle as "both a mechanism of progress and a vehicle of flight." 16

The popularity of cycling attracted the attention of the Hill-Top in 1896. In that year, the paper characterized the world as "unanimously interested in" the sport, to the extent that it had divided itself into three classes: the makers, the sellers, and the riders of bikes. The periodical responded to the sport's sudden popularity by introducing a cycling column as a regular feature. The inaugural edition took up the familiar plea of the organized biking community for towns to "dress up" their highways. The second column described two routes cyclists at the resort might find of interest: Diamond Run, a five-mile circuit around Shaker Hill, and Spring Hill Run, a four-mile trip around Ricker Hill. It also directed guests eager to learn how to ride the wheel to Mr. Plumb, the night clerk at the Poland Spring House and an expert cyclist. 17


As with the carriage and canoe, the bicycle appealed to people in part because it brought them closer to nature. This explains why "a great admirer of nature" such as Boston theater owner Benjamin F. Keith spent so much of his time at Poland Spring driving, boating, and cycling. It also suggests why a party of cyclists had such a delightful time trying for two hours to find their way back to the resort after losing their way along the shores of Sabbathday Lake and through the woods of New Gloucester. Finally, it may indicate why so much of the news in the cycling column mentioned riders who had biked to the countryside from the city of Portland.

The trips undertaken by cyclists exemplified the circuitous route the modern traveler often followed in pursuit of antimodernity. Although reports in the paper verify that many bikers did seek to get away from urban environments, they also confirm that cyclists brought along an "overt pro-urban predilection" on their flights from progress. When urban bikers reached the countryside, they expected to find modern comforts. A dinner at the resort culminated many bicycle trips to Poland Spring. As for the ride itself, some cyclists preferred controlled contact with nature to freewheeling along rural roadsides. To meet this demand, the Rickers opened a three-mile track on the hilltop in 1897.

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Despite the prominence of appeals to romanticism, publicists more often promoted the ideal of "rational recreation." The "positive sports creed" held that athletic competition built character, exercise improved health, and muscular Christianity developed morality. In short, adherents of the "strenuous life" viewed sports as appropriate training for success in modern society. The acceptance of this philosophy and the interrelated triad of beliefs that underpinned it went a long way toward furthering the legitimation of leisure at Poland Spring.²⁰

In a culture infatuated with the idea that life was an evolutionary struggle only the fittest survived, sports served as yet another arena of competition. Fishermen, for instance, cast their lines into the Range Ponds not only to engage in a Darwinian contest against bass, trout, pickerel, perch, and salmon, but also to prove who the ablest anglers were. Several guests vied for this distinction during the summer of 1898, apparently with little regard for conserving the stock of available fish. On July 25th, the team of Rose and Maginnis hauled in nine bass, a catch that tipped the scales at seventeen pounds. Two days later, challengers Fay and


Lears regards the late nineteenth-century "cult of the strenuous life" not only as a program for individual success, but also as a path toward class revitalization traveled by the bourgeois.
Hoagland brought in ten fish, only to find they weighed in at a mere thirteen and one-half pounds. On July 29th, Rose and Maginnis tried to better their own record, but fell two fish and a few pounds short. On the same day, Joseph Sawyer shattered the mark and demonstrated his fanaticism for fishing by catching 230 trout, a slaughter the Hill-Top compared to Admiral George Dewey's recent conquest at Manila Bay in the Philippines. Not to be outdone, a trio of guests from the Poland Spring resort hauled in 321 bass a few days later while fishing at Belgrade Mills, Maine.\(^{21}\)

Cyclists also exhibited the competitive spirit that pervaded Gilded-Age culture. Their challenges were to outdo one another by riding greater distances and at swifter speeds. Although the inaugural edition of the "Cyclist Column" specifically advised bikers to "ride for rest," not for distance, subsequent issues of the Hill-Top extolled the achievements of riders who undertook lengthy trips. The paper reported, for example, that three cyclists from Portland rode to the Mansion House, a distance of thirty miles, in two hours and thirty minutes on August 16, 1896. The following year,


Commodore Dewey commanded the United States Navy's Asiatic Squadron against a Spanish naval fleet based at Manila Bay on May 1, 1898. In seven hours, the squadron managed to disable or destroy all the Spanish vessels without sustaining any major ship damage or loss of life on the American side. This decisive victory made Dewey a national hero and earned him appointment to the rank of admiral.
two bikers surpassed this feat by riding all the way from Boston.22

The honor of the longest bicycle trip to the resort went to Maurice Augustus Burbank. In August of 1897, he journeyed from New Haven, Connecticut, to Poland Spring, Maine, covering nearly 250 miles of the distance by bike. The first leg of the route Burbank followed ended in Palmer, Massachusetts, and came within seven miles of qualifying as a "century run," a ride of one hundred miles. From Palmer, Burbank took a train to Boston. From there, he biked 134 miles to Yarmouthville, Maine, in sixteen hours, stopping to rest along the way for only one hour. The ride to his final destination added another twenty miles to the trip.23

For the many cyclists who started out from Portland, the competitive challenge lay in lowering the time it took to ride to Poland Spring. On June 27, 1897, three groups of wheelmen set out in a race against the clock. A strong wind and the broken seat of one rider prevented the first six cyclists from making good time. The second group, composed of four members from the Portland Athletic Club, had a better run, which they capped off with dinner at the Poland Spring House. The third


group turned in the swiftest time of the day. The two members of the League of American Wheelman reached the resort in a speedy two hours and fifteen minutes.  

Increased interest in tennis coincided with the bicycle craze. The Hill-Top reported in 1894 that tennis, along with croquet, had become "the favorite out-door sports" at the resort. The popularity of the pastime prompted the editors of the paper to sponsor a tennis tournament. The event attracted large crowds that enthusiastically cheered on the participants. After five rounds of "hard fought" matches, only two players remained from the original field of fourteen -- Ted Wakefield and Mr. Singer.

Wakefield was a student from nearby Bates College in Lewiston, who had come to Poland Spring for the summer primarily to play second base on the resort's baseball team. His admirable athletic qualities exemplified how the modern leisure revolution transformed sports into a paradigm for work. The Hill-Top described him as a "very brainy" athlete and "very conscientious worker." Wakefield displayed both traits on the tennis court, where he took great delight in

24 "Cyclist Column," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 3.
making his opponents hustle for all they were worth by putting
the ball just out of their reach.26

Singer's social background differed markedly from that of
his challenger. Heir to a sewing machine company, Singer was
a Yale University candidate who was vacationing at the resort
with his family. The paper characterized him as a "very
popular" and "excellent young man." On the tennis court,
Singer was a strong and steady player who had mastered the
Lawford stroke. More importantly, he never became rattled and
always played "from beginning to end in the same hard,
faithful manner." Despite these qualities, Singer met his
match in Ted Wakefield who emerged the victor in three
straight sets.27

The emphasis placed on the determination exhibited by the
two tennis players rationalized recreation by portraying it
more like worthwhile work than frivolous play. The Hill-Top
even made watching tennis seem like hard work. It noted the
"tremendous applause" that punctuated rallies and remarked
that "it was enough to inspire the soul of a Carthaginian to
even greater efforts." The intensity of one match so swept up

26Rodgers, Work Ethic, 108-9; "Tennis Tournament," Hill-
Top, 19 August 1894, 8.

27"Bubbles," Hill-Top, 5 August 1894, 3; E. Digby
Baltzell, Sporting Gentlemen: Men's Tennis from the Age of
Honor to the Cult of the Superstar (New York: Free Press,
1995), 44; "Tennis Tournament," Hill-Top, 19 August 1894, 8.

Named for 1887 Wimbledon champion, Herbert Lawford, the
stroke was a baseline forehand.
one onlooker that at the conclusion of a hard fought point, she exuberantly tossed her summer bonnet into the air. Only the glaring disapproval of the older set forestalled further outbursts of emotion by the "pretty young ladies" gathered round the tennis court.  

Women were not restricted to rooting from the sidelines; sports could develop their character, too. Marcia Jordan, for example, encouraged females to take to the roads on bicycles. In an 1895 letter, she advised women to persevere in the face of obstacles such as dresses that threatened to wind around bicycle wheels and a "fatal magnetism" that seemed to draw riders toward collisions with watering troughs, holes in the ground, and other cyclists. Jordan resolved the first problem by replacing her ordinary clothes with "a dark blue serge short skirt and Norfolk jacket, black canvas leggins and dark straw hat." She recommended a wider outlook as the solution to the second. Jordan imagined that if a woman could endure the "lame muscles, black-and-blue decorations and the like honorable scars" that inevitably came with cycling, the time would arrive when "some fine day sees you, wrench in pocket, confidence in glance, spinning off past green fields, fascinated, bewitched, a creature with new powers and a fresh enchantment."  

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28Ibid.

29Marcia J[ordan], Letter to the Editors, Hill-Top, 14 July 1895, 3.
Cornelia T. Crosby of Phillips, Maine, joined Jordan in encouraging the confident, empowered New Woman to renounce the inactivity of her staid Victorian predecessors. "Fly Rod" Crosby found her fascination and enchantment while hunting in the Maine woods and fishing on its lakes. During her visit to Poland Spring in July of 1897, the Hill-Top described Crosby as "a fine shot" and "the most expert woman fly caster in the world." "Fly Rod" attributed the ability of women to fish to a love of the sport that made them "more enthusiastic over it and better anglers than men." Rather than dividing the two sexes, however, she regarded the outdoors as the common ground where males and females could come closer together. Crosby observed that "life in the woods broadens women and makes them more companionable to men."30

Another missionary who brought the message of sports' virtue to Poland Spring was Captain William H. Daily. Described as "one of the world's most famous swimmers," Daily was a lifesaver whose "scores of heroic and daring deeds" had earned him public acclaim as well as a Congressional medal. In August of 1895, Daily paid a visit to the resort to talk about swimming and display his aquatic skills. At least two hundred spectators watched the exhibition he put on at Middle

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For more on the appeal of cycling to women, see Somers, Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 233-6; Harmond, "Progress and Flight," 252.

30Higham, "Reorientation," 31; "Miss 'Fly Rod,'" Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 4.
Range Pond. Daily offered to come back and give lessons to guests of the resort so long as a minimum of fourteen people expressed interest in learning how to swim. He did not return. Nevertheless, the Hill-Top reported the following summer that "bathing in the middle lake has become very popular."^31

The attraction of swimming was not competition, but exercise. During the late nineteenth century, the idea that the body was a dynamic system whose functioning improved with activity gained dominance over the concept of it as a divinely predestined creation. The first provisions for guests to improve their strength and endurance came in 1886, when the Rickers included a "gymnasium with all modern inventions for sport and health," as well as a bowling alley and billiard parlor, in the annex added on to the Poland Spring House. As interest in recreational exercise grew, the proprietors of the resort had a tennis court, golf course, and bicycle track constructed on the hilltop and bath houses built along the shores of Middle Range Pond.^32

During the 1890s, guests pursued their versions of the strenuous life in a variety of ways. The Reverend William H. Bolster and Dan Field took on challengers at the croquet

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^31"A Real Hero," Hill-Top, 18 August 1895, 2; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 16 August 1896, 9.

^32Mrozek, Sport and American Mentality, 189-225; Poland Spring Hotels (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1887), no pagination; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 29 July 1894, 9; "Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 16 August 1896, 9.
grounds. A group of "boss bowlers" from Boston frequented the alleys in the annex. A "popular young 'Quaker'" went for "a five-mile spin in his running tights in the early morning," a sight that attracted a great deal of attention. George T. Pearson and John Holton made a fourteen-mile hike to and from Mechanic Falls. Less energetic guests accepted the invitation of the Hill-Top to try the "Mile Walk." A party of climbers cycled to Mont Chat Noir where they climbed the four-hundred-foot hill the local "peasants" called Black Cat. Certain that cycling furnished more exercise than all the other recreational activities combined, Benjamin Keith rode his bike. To exhibit his fitness, Poland Spring's most avid cyclist liked to sprint past horse teams on uphill stretches of roadway -- a practice known as "scorching."

Despite the emphasis placed on the rational value of well developed character and bodies, commentators did not forget the purely pleasurable element of recreation. They acknowledged that sports were supposed to be fun, too. An article in the Lewiston Saturday Journal made this point in 1892 by noting the "delectation" the tennis courts, croquet grounds, and baseball field offered guests. A few years later, a promotional guide reiterated that the accommodations available for sailing, fishing, and outdoor games presented a great

variety of opportunities for "entertainment and delectation." In 1894 the Hill-Top weighed in with the observation that the healthful exercise sports provided added "fully fifty percent to the enjoyment of the average guest." 

"The Game of all Games"

Although promoters developed a romantic mythology and pastoral image for baseball, the national pastime gained a wide following at Poland Spring more because of the rational values it reinforced and the recreational pleasure it provided. The competitive nature of the sport necessitated maximum effort on the part of the athletes and instilled a sense of community within their fans. In addition to the satisfaction furnished by identifying with the home team, spectators were able to experience the enjoyment of athletic endeavor without any of the sweating.

Guided by the notion that there was benefit in observing as well as participating in sports, guests expended twelve hundred dollars in the Amusement Fund to hire players for a baseball team in 1894. The club played twice a week, usually on Wednesdays and Saturdays, using a diamond laid out near the front entrance of the Poland Spring House. The location of the playing field ensured that fans would find plenty of

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"Poland Spring," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 7; Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir (S. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 84; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 19 August 1894, 9.
shaded seats on the hotel veranda. The Rickers agreed to support the project by letting team members have free room and board.\textsuperscript{35}

Several of the recruits were journeyman semi-professionals. Hull, the firstbaseman, was a shoemaker from Ipswich, Massachusetts, while Harris, an outfielder, hailed from Haverhill, Massachusetts. College athletes formed the core of the team. Michael Powers, a catcher from Holy Cross, joined three Bates College classmates, Burrill, Pulsifer, and Ted Wakefield, at Poland Spring. In addition to his prowess on the tennis court, Wakefield knew his way around the diamond. Boston baseball magnate A. H. Soden described him as a "dandy" player. The star of the team, however, was outfielder Louis Sockalexis, a Penobscot from Old Town, Maine, who came to the resort by way of Ricker Classical Institute in Houlton, Maine. Proudly referred to as "our red man," Sockalexis possessed a rifle-like right arm that made him "the best thrower in New England."\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{35}"The Amusement Fund," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 5; "Court of County Commissioners Hearing on Petition," Poland, ME, 12 September 1894, TMs, 189, Alvan Bolster Ricker Memorial Library, Poland, ME.

\textsuperscript{36}"Hearing on Petition," 189; "Our Baseball Team’s Future," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 8; "Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 7.
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In 1897 Sockalexis’s talent landed him in Cleveland, where he became the first Native American to play major league baseball. According to lore, the Cleveland entry in the American League took the name Indians in 1914 in honor of Louis Sockalexis.
The Hill-Top had high hopes for the team, boasting that it promised "to be the strongest hotel nine in the country." The paper realized, however, that attaining the distinction would require concerted effort from both the players and their supporters. Advocating the virtue of hard work, it railed against "lazy ball playing," warning team members who did not put life and energy into their efforts that they would lose their jobs. At the same time, the periodical assured the athletes that so long as they gave their best, they would hear no complaints, win or lose. Indeed, the editors had instructed spectators to cheer "a good hit, a remarkable catch, a well-stolen base." They expected nothing less than "hearty support," reminding fans that "applause costs nothing, but it has won many a game of ball." The final charge to the team was: "Boys, work! hustle! win if you can, but play ball all the time." As an added incentive, the Hill-Top announced that it would present prizes to the players with the highest batting average, most runs scored, and best fielding percentage.\(^3\)

The 1894 baseball season got off to an auspicious start as the club decisively defeated New Auburn eleven to one. The players' "business like" approach to the game so impressed the Hill-Top that it immediately pronounced the home team "worthy of wearing the Poland uniform." The paper even dared to

\(^3\)"The Amusement Fund," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 5; "Baseball," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 6.
predict that the players "undoubtedly will prove themselves to be the best nine we have had here."  

The team won two more games before falling to a powerful club from Lewiston by the score of nine to five. The Hill-Top had anticipated the loss, since the opponents fielded the highest salaried team in the New England League. The paper did manage to find one positive outcome of the game -- the ability of the home team to prevent the challengers "from making a big score." The Poland Spring nine quickly rebounded, reeling off two victories to run their record to five and one. Confident that their team could overpower most of the remaining local opponents, supporters looked to do battle with other New England hotel teams.

The challenge was ill-timed. The day before it appeared in the Hill-Top, the team suffered its second loss, a tight four to two decision to the Murphy Balsams. Unlike the earlier setback to the team from Lewiston, this time defeat at the hands of the Portland club brought no honor. The Murphy Balsams had a reputation for being "as big a set of rowdies as were ever set loose." The paper placed much of the blame for the defeat squarely on the strong shoulders of Louis Sock-alexis. Although the rest of "the boys played good ball," they could not overcome their mate's two errors and four

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38"Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 15 July 1894, 5.

39"Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 7; "Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 29 July 1894, 7.
hitless at bats. While the paper excused the "off day" as something every athlete experienced, it also made clear that fans expected Sockalexis to redeem himself by hitting at least three home runs in the next game.\textsuperscript{40}

A more debilitating setback befell the Poland Spring team a few days later. Three disgruntled players, Plaisted, Lawson, and Sykes, left the team. The exact circumstances of their departure are unclear. Edward Ricker said he sent them home. The Hill-Top first reported that the trio departed in a dispute over club rules; then, it suggested several weeks later that the players had defected to "some strong team in the mountains or elsewhere." Whatever the explanation, the incident highlighted the delicate social equilibrium that existed at the resort.\textsuperscript{41}

The incident also confirmed unflattering stereotypes of baseball players. Because they often did not act like "Sunday School boys," organizers had tried from the outset to establish high standards of conduct for team members. The Hill-Top instructed all athletes, including those on visiting clubs, to act "gentlemanly" and play fairly. "Dirty ball" had no place at Poland Spring. Fans would only tolerate "clean, manly contests for the supremacy of the diamond." In the competi-

\textsuperscript{40} "Hearing on Petition," 329; "Baseball," Hill-Top, 5 August 1894, 7.

\textsuperscript{41} "Hearing on Petition," 223; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 5 August 1894, 3; "Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 12 August 1894, 7.
tive struggle, character counted for at least as much as conquest."42

The team found replacements for the three players who had departed, but thereafter the caliber of play declined. Three successive losses in mid August, coupled with injuries that sidelined the catcher and two pitchers, led to the decision to disband the club. After a two-week hiatus, however, the addition of several substitutes returned the Poland Spring nine to full strength. A pick-up team from Lewiston provided the first opposition for the new squad. The hero of the contest was Louis Sockalexis, whose hitting powered the team to an easy victory. In fact, the two home runs he hammered in the first inning nearly met the challenge the Hill-Top had made to him a month earlier.43

On September 3rd, the team traveled to Biddeford, Maine, where it lost an exciting game by the score of seven to five. The Hill-Top blamed the loss on the absence of Powers, the team’s catcher. After recovering from fractured ribs sustained during a game against a team from Rockland, Maine, he had headed off to North Conway, New Hampshire, to join his

42"Hearing on Petition," 328; "Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 6.

43"Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 12 August 1894, 7; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 2 September 1894, 3; "Baseball," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 6.
Holy Cross batterymate, Smith, on the Intervale baseball team."

Two days after the trip to Biddeford, the Poland Spring club went to "combat" against the Balsams for the fourth time during the summer. Determined to avenge two earlier losses, Eddie Murphy had brought along a new team made up of players from the Portland League. In a "corker" of a contest filled with much excitement, Poland Spring rallied from an early deficit to take a late lead. Unfortunately for the home team, rain shortened the game and the score reverted to a sixteen to sixteen tie. The hotel team played its final game of the 1894 season the following day in Rockland. The twelve to five victory left the club with an overall record of ten wins, seven losses, and one tie."

Despite some dashed hopes along the way, "the game of all games" brought patrons of the resort many hours of "solid enjoyment" during the summer. Fans joyfully celebrated the victories and sorrowfully mourned the defeats of the home team. In the process, allegiance to the Poland Spring nine fostered a community spirit among guests. Each game placed the honor of the resort at stake. Each win brought glory not

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""Bubbles," Hill-Top, 2 September 1894, 3, 9; "Baseball," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 6; "Bubbles," Hill-Top, 16 September 1894, 8.

""Baseball," Hill-Top, 9 September 1894, 6.
only to the players, but also to the loyal rooters who provided them with both financial and vocal support."

Perhaps because of the troubles they had experienced with ball players in 1894, guests did not organize a team in subsequent years and enthusiasm for the sport faded. Reports of baseball games did not reappear in the Hill-Top until 1898. Thereafter, most of the contests at Poland Spring pitted clubs from other towns against one another. On occasion, patrons of the resort took to the diamond themselves. In 1899, for example, a group of guests calling itself the Brooklyns defeated a group calling itself the Bostons by the score of fourteen to thirteen. The following summer, the Yanigans, a squad made up of older guests, lost to the Poland Kids, a group made up of their younger counterparts, in a battle that brought glory to all the players and entertainment to the patrons who chose to watch from the sidelines. The Yanigans rebounded, defeating a team of resort employees, the Tilly-slowboys, a few days later."

""Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 22 July 1894, 6; "The Amusement Fund," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 5.

The relationship between sports clubs and community identification is discussed in Rader, "Quest for Subcommunities," 361-9; Hardy, How Boston Played, 129-46. The role of baseball in this process is addressed in Riess, City Games, 68.

""Base-Ball of August 20th," Hill-Top, 28 August 1898, 22; "Great Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 16; "Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 19 August 1900, 20; "Base-Ball," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 15.
"Golf Is King"

As interest in baseball waned, the popularity of golf waxed. The Rickers introduced the sport to Poland Spring in 1896. The reasons for its ascendance over the next five summers mirrored in microcosm the reasons for the leisure revolution that had taken place at the resort during the preceding two decades. Like other popular recreational activities of the era, golf offered the romance of a nostalgic past and close contact with nature. Furthermore, it built the character and provided the exercise sought by rational recreationists. Finally, the king of sports provided golfers with enjoyment by offering them many ways to participate in the culture of consumption and conferring upon them the elite status of sportsmen and women.

Arthur H. Fenn played the first round of golf at Poland Spring on July 30, 1896, finishing the nine-hole course he had designed with a score of forty-seven strokes. Fenn had taken up the sport three years earlier while living in Aiken, South Carolina. Within a few years, he had become one of the nation's leading golfers and finest instructors. In 1896 the Rickers prevailed upon him to come to Poland Spring and lay out a golf course. Fenn not only came, he agreed to stay on as the resort's resident golf professional and course supervisor, positions he held into the twentieth century."

Despite the report that golf had "taken a great hold upon the guests," few people played during the first season. Thereafter, the ranks steadily grew as those patrons who came to Fenn seeking lessons joined those who already knew how to play. By 1898 the paper commented that wild horses could not stop most golfers once they took up the game. Each day, it seemed, more and more players arrived at the resort. From morning until night, dozens of enthusiasts filled the links and from year to year, their skills improved."

Romantic nostalgia for the past and love of nature contributed to the popularity of golf. Although the Hill-Top could not link the sport to the ancient world, it still possessed the requisite antiquity and geographical origins to appeal to antimodernist inclinations. The paper traced the game back to the misty lochs and bens of sixteenth-century Scotland and its most celebrated popularizer, King James the Sixth. In a more lighthearted moment, the editors imagined that Scotsmen Macbeth, Macduff, and Robert, the Bruce, had formed one of the sport’s first threesomes.

In modern times, a round of golf presented antimodern romantics with the opportunity to escape enclosed city buildings for open country fields. Holes named Woods,
Birches, Spring, Lakeview, Hill, Grove, and Rockery served as constant reminders to players of the natural surroundings. Moreover, the artistry of golf added to the beauty of the landscape. The Hill-Top explained that the "picturesque" sport gave to the grounds "a scheme of color the nodding heads of ripening grass of former days did not possess." The recreational landscape also improved upon its pastoral progenitor by adding "life, activity, and healthful animation" to the countryside.51

Playing the course gave golfers a tour of the main features of the natural and built environments found on the hilltop. The first hole started near the grove at the southwest end of the Poland Spring House. The second and third fairways headed north, flanked to the right by woods and to the left by the road leading to the spring. The Spring House provided the backdrop for the fourth hole, as well as an invitation for golfers to take a rest and "get a refreshing drink of the world-renowned Poland water." At the fifth fairway, golfers turned and headed back uphill. The elevation of the sixth hole provided a panoramic view of the Range Ponds and the surrounding countryside. The final three holes passed by the Poland Spring House, Mansion House, and Maine State Building respectively. Along the course, players encountered fences, roads, and a variety of other "natural hazards." After tapping in the final putt of a round, players conve-

51"On Poland’s Links," Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 2.
niently found themselves only a few steps away from the entrance to the main hotel. Golfers staying at the Mansion House made the course more convenient for themselves by playing the holes in reverse order.\textsuperscript{52}

Even though the \textit{Hill-Top} pronounced the original layout of the golf course "admirable," Fenn kept tinkering with it. In 1897 the first hole was moved closer to the front entrance of the Poland Spring House and the grove became the site of the seventh fairway. Two years later, the long first fairway was divided into two holes and the grove was dropped from play. These alterations lengthened the course from 2465 yards in 1897 to 2815 yards in 1900. Meanwhile, work commenced on new greens and bunkers. Three years of laying new sod and dumping tons of wood ash, along with constant mowing and careful nursing, produced the perfect course -- one virtually free of poor lies. According to the \textit{Hill-Top}, everyone who played the course agreed that no other resort could rival, let alone surpass, the "the best hotel links in the country."\textsuperscript{53}

Although golf provided ample exposure to nature, it lacked one key romantic element found in fishing and canoeing -- the poetry of motion. The iron club could not match the grace of either the bamboo pole or the wooden paddle.


Swinging a lofter was more mechanical than casting a rod or paddling an oar, for every motion needed to be precise in order to hit the ball squarely. As the Hill-Top astutely observed, both machine and golfer obeyed the same rule: "each time the same and no misses."

What golf lacked in poetry it made up for in competitiveness. Those golfers who approached the sport as a game of "athletic solitaire" had as their objective the lowering of their best score. The realistic goal for average players was to reduce it until they had overtaken Colonel Bogie and parred the course. The very best players aimed to shatter a variety of course records. The final issue of the Hill-Top for the 1898 season presented golfers with a list of the scores to set their sights on over the winter: W. P. Comstock held the men's amateur records for nine and eighteen holes at forty and eighty-three strokes; the women's amateur record for nine holes belonged to Miss Anna Louise Hoeke at fifty-eight; Mr. Ingalls and Miss Florence J. Stinson claimed the mixed pairs record at one hundred and four; while Arthur Fenn owned the professional records for nine and eighteen holes at thirty-six and seventy-nine.

Try as they might, none of the golfers at Poland Spring could better Fenn's marks. His mastery of the course enabled

54"Golf," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 2.

him to become the first player to shoot a round under par and make a hole-in-one. By 1900 he had lowered both of his course records to thirty-four and seventy-three strokes. In search of greater challenges, Fenn spent the off-season playing in tournaments. During the fall of 1897, for example, he entered nineteen open tournaments, seventeen of which he won. Fenn’s more than fifty championship trophies, many of which he displayed in the office of the Poland Spring House, attested to his distinction as "one of the bright particular stars of golfdom."56

Competition for Fenn also came in the form of exhibition matches with other elite golfers. In August of 1899, he played a match with John Duncan Dunn of North Berwick, Scotland. A large gallery watched the resident pro best the Scotsman. Ever the good sport, Dunn ended the day in resounding fashion, dressing in Highland costume and entertaining guests with another legacy of Scottish culture -- the bag pipes.57

Fenn’s most frequent foe was Alexander H. Findlay, an employee of the Wright and Ditson sporting goods company in Boston. Like Fenn, Findlay was one of the leading golfers in the land. Between 1897 and 1900, the two men played 1333


57“Golf,” Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 21.
holes of golf against one another on courses throughout the nation. After four years of head-to-head competition, Findlay held only a slim six hole lead. At Poland Spring, duels between the pair drew large crowds. To heighten interest in the "very keen but friendly rivalry," guests sometimes put up a purse for the winner of a match.9

For amateur golfers, team matches and tournaments provided the main forums for competition. In 1897 five of the resort's top players defeated a squad from the Portland Golf Club. In 1899, and again in 1900, the groups played one match at each course with the home team winning every time. Golfers at the resort also divided into teams for intramural contests. In 1898 Arthur Fenn formed the Blues and the Reds by pairing off twenty of the best male golfers at Poland Spring. The participants vied for a prize of six dozen golf balls offered by Charles I. Travelli. Travelli's Blues lost the contest, and the golf balls, six matches to four. The following summer, two teams of six golfers competed against one another. The group representing the Poland Spring House won bragging rights on the hilltop by defeating the Mansion House entry.9

Tournaments followed a variety of formats: male, female, and mixed fields; children and adults; singles, pairs, and

58"Golf," Hill-Top, 22 August 1897, 3; "Golf," Hill-Top, 5 August 1900, 5.

59"Golf," Hill-Top, 12 September 1897, 4; "Golf," Hill-Top, 6 August 1899, 11; "Golf," Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 10-1; "Golf," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 15; "Golf," Hill-Top, 2 September 1900, 13; "Golf," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 10.
mixed pairs; nine, eighteen, and thirty-six holes; medal and match play. They also tested a variety of skills. In addition to contests based upon a standard round of golf, the resort hosted driving, approaching, and putting tournaments. Driving contests rewarded golfers whose strength enabled them to hit the ball the farthest. The other two skill competitions, in contrast, favored those who played with accuracy and finesse. In an approach tournament, contestants played nine balls, three each from distances of eighty, forty, and twenty yards. The player who holed out all the balls with the least number of shots won. Putting tournaments made use of a miniature course laid out in front of the Poland Spring House in 1899. The objective was to complete a round with as few putts as possible.60

The ceremonies and trophy presentations that often culminated tournaments demonstrated the significance guests attached to athletic competition. Victory was not enough; it needed to be celebrated and memorialized. In 1897, therefore, the Rickers decided to honor the winner of a thirty-six hole, handicap tournament with a large silver cup. From an all-male field of twenty-five golfers, Dr. Daniel Karsner emerged victorious, narrowly defeating his two closest competitors. He received his prize at a banquet held in the dining room of the Poland Spring House. An "elaborate display" added to the

60"Golf," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 22; "Golf," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 18.
festive atmosphere. Using green baize, sweet peas, and marbles, waiter Louis F. Wareham had made an "ornate and charming" centerpiece that perfectly reproduced the golf course in miniature.\textsuperscript{61}

In subsequent years, benefactors of the sport added to the list of prizes for which golfers competed. Two of the most generous sponsors during the 1898 season were Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Converse of Boston, both of whom were enthusiastic and splendid players. In July Mr. Converse presented a cup to the winner of a tournament featuring both male and female contestants. A few days later, Mrs. Converse gave a golf belt to the winner of a ladies’ tournament.\textsuperscript{62}

The 1898 season marked the emergence of twelve-year-old Harris B. Fenn, the son of the course professional, as one of the Poland Spring’s dominant players. A few days after arriving with his mother and sister from the family’s winter home in Aiken, South Carolina, Harris beat sixteen competitors in a tournament. The Hill-Top marveled at the "splendid" scores posted by the "chip off the old block" and remarked


Contemporary social commentator Thorstein Veblen reasoned that trophies historically reflected "the desire of the successful men to put their prowess in evidence by exhibiting some durable result of their exploits."

\textsuperscript{62}"Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 22 July 1900, 14; "Golf," Hill-Top, 17 July 1898, 12; "Golf," Hill-Top, 24 July 1898, 7.
that "he played like a veteran." The paper attributed the boy's advanced skills to inheritance of some of "his father's fine ability." "If he continues to improve," the editors predicted, "it will not be long before the son will beat the father." 63

Arthur and Harris Fenn were not the only members of the family to excel at the sport. Mrs. Fenn and daughter Bessie also had their share of success on the Poland Spring links. During one weeklong stretch in August of 1899, the matriarch of the family had the lowest net or gross score in three successive ladies' tournaments. During the same summer, Harris Fenn's spectacular play continued. He received top honors in several tournaments; won every team match he played; and challenged for the course championship. The next year marked the blossoming of Bessie Fenn's golf talents, as she took second place in a ladies' tournament. 64

Harris Fenn did not fare so well in the Poland Spring Cup tournament. The Rickers established the prize in 1899 for the golfer with the highest point total earned during a series of weekly tournaments. The player with the lowest net score (net equals the gross score minus a handicap) in each round received three points; the one with the second lowest total

63"Golf," Hill-Top, 31 July 1898, 6, 14.
64"Golf," Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 21-2; "Golf," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 21; "Golf," Hill-Top, 9 July 1899, 10; "Golf," Hill-Top, 16 July 1899, 6; "Golf," Hill-Top, 6 August 1899, 11; "Golf," Hill-Top, 13 August 1899, 10-1; "Golf," Hill-Top, 8 July 1900, 5.
received two points; and the one with the third lowest net received one point. The use of net rather than gross scores penalized golfers such as Harris Fenn who had low handicaps. Thus, even though he had the sixth best gross score after the first two rounds of the tournament, Fenn found himself mired in twenty-first place."

During the 1899 season, Harris Fenn and his fellow golfers also competed for the Maine State, Poland, and Mansion Cups. The three additional prizes grew out of a plan devised by several patrons to organize a "big golf tournament." Guests responded to the appeal for donations with great enthusiasm. Women at the resort took it upon themselves to subscribe for the purchase of a fourth prize. They established the Ladies' Cup to ensure that the golfer with the lowest gross score in the first stage of the competition received the recognition due him, regardless of whether his net score qualified him to continue play in later rounds."

The inaugural tournament attracted fifty-four guests, who played four, nine-hole rounds the first week. H. B. McFarland turned in the lowest score, edging out Harris Fenn for title to the Ladies' Cup by one lone stroke. During the second week, the twenty-four players with the lowest net scores challenged for the three remaining prizes. From the top

""Golf," Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 10.
flight of eight golfers, John R. Suydam "charged through the long grass, climbed over rocks and through ditches" to win the Maine State Cup; from the second flight, a "splendid" golfer by the name of Henry S. Wampole took the Poland Cup; and from the third flight, William G. Read earned the Mansion Cup. The awards ceremony for the tournament provided Byron Moulton with the forum to reflect upon the changes that had taken place in recreation at the resort since 1876."

One important new trend in the sport was the increasing participation of females. From the time golf was introduced at Poland Spring, women were some of Arthur Fenn’s most eager students and the sport's most enthusiastic participants. By 1897 the Hill-Top reported that a half dozen members of "Poland’s fair sex have become enamored with the game and some are progressing rapidly." Their love of the sport did not surprise the paper. An article in the paper joked: "This is a game the ladies should enjoy, for they can still have their afternoon Tee, although it may not be without grounds."

Clearly, the Hill-Top understood women’s interest in golf in different terms than men’s. Its pun insinuated that the ladies regarded the tee more as a social than as an athletic

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setting. Indeed, women assumed the role of hostesses at many golfing events. The tea and lemonade served by Mrs. Bemis and Helen Stinson, for example, turned a ladies putting tournament into an "exceedingly pretty" affair. When women did venture onto the course, their "feminine beauty and grace" contrasted with the opposite sex's "manly vigor and skill." The comparison implied women lacked one of the principal requirements of "manly sport" -- "the interest attached to winning in competitive contest." Consequently, while male golfers battled for trophies, female golfers often played for prizes deemed "very handsome and appropriate for ladies."  

Despite the tendency to diminish women's commitment to sports, the Hill-Top did recognize that grace, beauty, and sociability did not completely preclude a competitive spirit. In 1898 it complimented the women who played well in a tournament that saw six female golfers go up against thirteen males. The paper also credited some of the women playing in mixed foursomes with rolling up their sleeves and "doing their share of the work." Several summers later, the periodical praised Miss Emily Lockwood for her fine play against a

"Putting Tournament," Hill-Top, 2 September 1900, 14; "Golfiana," Hill-Top, 14 August 1898, 1; "Golf," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 21.

Historians have noted that legitimators of leisure tended to associate sports with traits such as strength, courage, self-discipline, and competitiveness identified as masculine. The ideology of "muscular Christianity," for example, presented an intensely masculine view of athletic endeavor. See Mrozek, Sport and American Mentality, 232-3; Adelman, A Sporting Time, 279-86; Riess, City Games, 29-30, 156-8.
"plucky opponent," Miss Eleanor McGovern, in the final round of a tournament.  

Miss Lockwood's admirers honored her for the hard fought victory at a supper hosted by Richard H. Stearns, Jr., in September of 1900. Stearns, scion of a prominent Boston mercantile family, was another of the many benefactors who supported golf at Poland Spring. In 1898 he had presented the prizes for a ladies' tournament -- a box of candy in the shape of a caddie bag and a "very pretty" vase. In addition to sponsoring the fete for Emily Lockwood, Stearns also backed a putting contest that the Hill-Top described as "the event" of the 1900 season.

The competition featured twenty-two women and twelve men who were challenging for the titles of best female and male putter respectively. After playing eighteen holes, the field narrowed down to eight women and four men. They, in turn, played off in single elimination until only two female and two male contestants remained. In the final round, a large crowd, which followed the action with intense interest, watched Florence J. Stinson defeat her sister, Helen, and Charles Travelli triumph over Mr. Morrogh. At the completion of the two tense battles, players and spectators retired to the grove

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70 "Golf," Hill-Top, 17 July 1898, 12; "Golf," Hill-Top, 24 July 1898, 7; "In Honor of Miss Lockwood," Hill-Top, 2 September 1900, 5.

71 "Golf," Hill-Top, 14 August 1898, 5; "Putting Contest," Hill-Top, 5 August 1900, 17.

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for refreshments served by Mrs. Morrogh and Mrs. Willet. That evening, everyone reconvened in the Music Hall for the presentation of awards. Mr. King, the master of ceremonies, first paid tribute to the victors and the contest’s sponsor with poems he had composed. He then presented each person with a trophy cup.\textsuperscript{72}

If the putting tournament was the social event of 1900, then the exhibition matches featuring Harry Vardon were the athletic events of the season. Coming off his third British Open title in five years, the celebrated Englishman had gained the reputation as "the greatest golfer in the world." The A. G. Spalding sporting goods company hoped to cash in on his fame by marketing a new golf ball named after the champion. To promote sales of the Vardon Flyer, the company sponsored in 1900 an extensive tour throughout the United States by the product’s namesake.\textsuperscript{73}

Vardon’s schedule slated him to play exhibition matches against Arthur Penn and Alexander Findlay at Poland Spring in mid August. Golfers at the resort awaited the champ’s arrival with great anticipation. Some even began to speculate on the success Vardon would have playing the course. Guests wagered whether he would be able to hit a three-hundred-yard drive at the sixth tee or shoot under thirty-six strokes overall. When

\textsuperscript{72}"Putting Contest," \textit{Hill-Top}, 5 August 1900, 17-8.

Vardon finally showed up at the resort on August 12th, a crowd of ardent golf fans greeted him."

The next day, Vardon and Fenn faced off in a thirty-six hole competition the Hill-Top described as "one of the greatest golf matches played in America." Despite having to slog through an intense rain storm, the Englishman shot a "beautiful" round, lowering the course records for nine and eighteen holes. Unable to beat the challenger on his own, Fenn teamed up with Findlay on August 14th in a best-ball competition. The pair defeated Vardon in "one of the hardest matches" he faced while touring the United States."

Byron Moulton led the large gallery that followed Vardon and marveled at his wonderful talent. Vardon's drives were straight, his approaches direct, his putts skillful. Even more impressively, he seemed to play so effortlessly. In short, the machine-like champion wasted no energy, made few errors, and left no scars on the golf course. Before departing Poland Spring, he dazzled fans one last time by driving golf balls straight up into the air. Pleased by his recep-

7"Golf," Hill-Top, 5 August 1900, 5; "Golf," 12 August 1900, 5; "Golf," Hill-Top, 19 August 1900, 13.

75"Golf," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 2; "Golf," Hill-Top, 19 August 1900, 13.

In a best-ball format, a team records the lower of the partners' scores on each hole.
tion, Vardon accepted an invitation to return at the end of the month for another exhibition.\textsuperscript{76}

The return match on August 25th once again pitted Vardon against the team of Fenn and Findlay. This time, however, he defeated the duo. Later that day, "one of the largest gatherings of the season" overflowed the Music Hall and spilled out onto the veranda of the Poland Spring House to watch the final presentation of golf awards for the 1900 season. The featured guest was the "distinguished golf player... from across the seas." In honor of his having "vanquished two formidable adversaries," Vardon received a cup named in his honor from the master of ceremonies, Byron Moulton. Moulton also praised Fenn and Findlay for their fine play and acknowledged "the many entertaining tournaments being given by kind and generous guests of the house." The evening concluded with the presentation of the August, Poland, Maine State, and Mansion House Cups.\textsuperscript{77}

For all the celebration of conquest on the golf course, this sport, unlike any other, tried to minimize the risk of failure. For the athletic aristocracy that had worked so hard to attain its social status, too much prestige was at stake to permit the triumph of the fittest. Thus, although they were reluctant to regulate competition in the economic arena, the


people of progress devised all sorts of schemes to regulate competition on the golf course. The best-ball format, for instance, enabled the team of Fenn and Findlay to defeat Vardon even though he beat or tied both players in every round. In the sport of golf, the principle of parity sup­planted that of superiority. The goal was to share the wealth, not to ensure that the fittest always prevailed.

Assigning handicaps was the main way participants in the sport addressed disparities in individual abilities. The handicap system allowed golfers to deduct a set number of strokes from their final score based upon their skill level. In theory, the goal was to place the worst player on par with the best player. Often the system overcompensated. In an 1897 handicap contest, for instance, Dr. Karsner’s score of 235 bettered Arthur Fenn’s tournament-low mark of 186, because the former had a minus forty and the latter a plus forty handicap. Even Byron Moulton who needed ninety-two more shots to finish the thirty-six holes finished eight strokes ahead of Fenn.78

Most of the tournaments at Poland Spring allowed players to use their handicaps. Sometimes it led to abuses. In the aftermath of the first round of competition for the Poland Spring Cup in 1899, Arthur Fenn tersely noted that several of the players were "overhandicapped." To mitigate this problem, the organizers of a "kickers" tournament held the following

78"Seen from the Tower," Hill-Top, 5 September 1897, 3.
year allowed golfers to set their own handicaps. They removed the incentive for players to inflate their handicaps by making the objective a range of scores, rather than the lowest net score. To this system, they also added the element of chance. The winner would be determined by drawing a number between eighty and ninety-five; whoever had the corresponding net score would be declared the champion. 79

Organizers of the major tournaments at the resort used several methods to balance the equalizing tendencies of the handicap system with its inequities. First, they almost always made sure that the best golfer -- the one with the lowest gross score -- received some prize, no matter what his or her final standing was based on net scores. Second, they often used the first round of a competition to separate the field into three different skill levels. Finally, after the preliminary round, handicaps were usually ignored. To win the Maine State, Poland, or Mansion Cup, a golfer had to defeat challengers in one-on-one match play.

In addition to honorific trophies, golfers sometimes competed for valuable prizes. In 1896, for example, Daniel W. Field offered the low scorer in each of three tournament flights the choice of a pair of tennis, bicycle, or golf shoes. Three summers later, H. B. Robie promised a fishing pole and reel to the winner of a driving contest. More often,

however, tournament champions received golf-related prizes such as caddie bags, clubs, and balls.\textsuperscript{80}

The sport of golf ideally suited the culture of consumption that flourished at the resort. Those golfers who could not win new equipment or accessories only needed to leaf through the \textit{Hill-Top} to find sources for every golf product imaginable. Tiffany and Company of New York City solicited mail orders for silver scoring pencils, gold golf pins, leather score books, silver prize cups, and an assortment of other golf souvenirs. Oren Hooper's Sons in Portland advertised that it stocked complete lines of golf supplies marketed under the brand names of Harry Vardon; Willie Dunn; Crawford, McGregor and Canby; A. G. Spalding; and Wright and Ditson. Consumers could cut out the middle man by ordering directly from the latter firm, which stated that it carried "all the latest and newest things in Golf," including Fenn and Findlay drivers.\textsuperscript{81}

Advertisers offered to outfit as well as equip golfers. The fashionable sportsman or woman could send to Lewiston for golf boots from the C. O. Morrell Shoe Company or for golf


\textsuperscript{81}\textit{Hill-Top}, 30 August 1896, 5; \textit{Hill-Top}, 1 July 1900, 5, 24; \textit{Hill-Top}, 3 July 1898, 23.

suits, stockings, belts, and white duck trousers from S. P. Robie. Players could also order red golf coats and sweaters, plain and vested capes, fancy flannels, and knit waistcoats from Houghton and Dutton of Boston. Commenting on the impact golf had on fashion, the Hill-Top quipped in 1897 that "it has been a great thing for the plaid manufacturers." Two years later, it joked that the time had finally arrived when the red coats of Old England were "a pleasing sight upon the green lawns of New England." As for the few portions of the golfer's body not covered by sportswear, Hinds' Honey and Almond Cream, on sale at the news counter in the Poland Spring House, promised to provide "soothing and excellent" protection.82

To help golfers keep track of their numerous belongings, the Rickers had a bicycle room located off the dining hall in the main hotel converted into a locker area in 1900. In addition, Arthur Fenn hired Charles W. Josselyn to supervise the room. Josselyn was a former employee of the Wright and Ditson Company with whom Fenn had worked while serving as a golf pro during the preceding winter in Palm Beach, Florida. Besides tending the locker room, Josselyn washed clubs, repaired golf shoes, and supervised the caddies.83

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82 Hill-Top, 28 August 1898, 15; Hill-Top, 1 September 1901, 9; "Golf," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 10; "On Poland's Links," Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 3; Hill-Top, 17 July 1898, 7; "Golf," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 11.

83 "Golf," Hill-Top, 1 July 1900, 5; "Golf," Hill-Top, 22 July 1900, 5.
Although hiring caddies to carry clubs suggests otherwise, many golfers pursued the sport for its health benefits. Finding an activity that supplied just the right amount of exercise was no easy task for Gilded-Age Americans. As the Hill-Top explained, croquet was "a game for children." Tennis, while suitable for adults, required male and female participants who were "physically well qualified." Baseball was an even more demanding sport. To attain even an ordinary level of proficiency, players needed the muscles, speed, eyesight, and reflexes only possessed by young to middle-aged men. The ideal sport for both sexes and all ages, the paper concluded, was golf."

The Hill-Top often emphasized the strenuous possibilities of the sport. Soon after the golf course opened, the paper predicted that "there will be interesting games to follow, with goodly exercise, and hearty appetites resultant." Several years later, an article observed that the sport had "a healthy constitution and great vitality." "For the wiry, withy, nerveless, exact man of muscle and willowy suppleness," golf presented the opportunity for athletic supremacy. For "the athlete with avoirdupois," it offered the chance for physical activity and weight loss."


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Byron Moulton also championed the health benefits of the sport. During his speech at the presentation of the Vardon Cup in 1900, Moulton praised golf for providing "real healthful exercise" that developed strong muscles, lungs, hearts, and minds. Moreover, he credited this form of athletic recreation with contributing to social well being by luring young men and women away from "questionable places of amusement."

Lest readers get the mistaken impression that swinging clubs and walking a mile and three-quarters around the course demanded too much exertion, the Hill-Top tempered these testimonials with assurances of the sport’s sedateness. The paper expressed the sentiment several ways: Golf offered "good exercise without being lively"; it gave "to many a man and woman the exercise they need, with no violent effort"; and it combined the advantages of "a two or three thousand yards stroll" with those of "a drowsy nap." Arthur Fenn put it yet another way. He maintained that golf was popular with middle-aged business men, because "the exercise was moderate and all that was required."

""Presentation of the Vardon Cup," Hill-Top, 2 September 1900, 14.

The promotion of sports as "wholesome recreations" providing an alternative to "vicious amusements" is considered in Hardy, How Boston Played, 51-61.

Golf was also popular because it made exercise pleasurable. To make this point, the *Hill-Top* contrasted the pain brought about by sawing cord wood with the delight experienced while pounding "a small and unoffending ball over four miles of hill and dale, twice within a day." The paper accounted for the difference, and thereby encapsulated the leisure revolution, with the explanation that the former activity was work, while the latter was play. Arthur Fenn elaborated that golf benefitted men by diverting their attention away from "business cares" and towards pleasure. In accordance with this idea, he concluded that the sport made "a splendid game for the summer visitors who are away for recreation or pleasure, as they get both at the same time."

The desire for both recreation and pleasure reflected the ambivalent and incomplete nature of the leisure revolution. The middle-class values of guests told them that sports should improve their body, mind, and character. Exercise, stress reduction, and competition justified playing a round of golf. At the same time, their aristocratic ambitions beckoned them to revel in the freedom from work, the joy of play, the satisfaction of consumption, and the status of leisure.

The *Hill-Top* promoted the aristocratic view of the sport, decreeing in 1897 that "Golf is King." The motto not only acknowledged the primacy of golf's popularity, it also


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affirmed the status ambitions of golf’s devotees. The king of sports was, in turn, the sport of kings. Historical references to the Scottish origins of "the 'Royal and Ancient Game' of Goff" supported this notion. The exclusive composition of the resort’s clientele and private nature of its facilities sustained it. Eagerly waiting to lay claim to the royal legacy was the Gilded-Age leisure class."

The leading idealizer of the aristocratic recreational landscape at Poland Spring was Maine artist Scott Leighton. The view from White Oak Hill looking southeast toward Ricker Hill and the Poland Spring House provided the setting for at least two of his paintings. In "A Morning Ride," painted circa 1893, six people chatted during a break. In "At the Jump," painted sometime between 1895 and 1905, a pack of

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"Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 1 August 1897, 6; "On Poland’s Links," Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 1; "Golf," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 1; Veblen, Theory of the Leisure Class, 53, 145, 156-65.

To the era’s principal analyst of the leisure class, Thorstein Veblen, sports were an integral part of the group’s "regime of status." Athletic pursuits met one of the primary canons of both "conspicuous leisure" and "conspicuous consumption" -- to flaunt wealth by reputedly wasting time or money. Veblen dismissed the rational and romantic claims of sports, arguing that contact with nature, the need for recreation, displays of "manly spirit," improved physical health, and moral uplift each represented "a colourable make-believe of purpose" that obscured the leisure class’s ulterior motive of wastefulness.

For more current, less jaundiced, assessments of the relationship between sports and status, see Somers, Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 23-51; Hardy, How Boston Played, 139-41; Mrozek, Sport and American Mentality, 118-26; Riess, City Games, 54-60.
hounds led a dozen hunters in frenzied pursuit of an unseen quarry.90

Whether Leighton painted real or imagined scenes, their significance lies in the artist's vision. When Leighton gazed across Middle Range Pond toward the hotel on the hilltop, he saw a recreational landscape, not the pastoral landscape seen by his former student, D. D. Coombs. He saw well-dressed equestrians, riding well-groomed horses, following well-trained hunting dogs, in imitation of the English aristocracy. He saw a "status community" that in part defined its identity on the basis of the sports it pursued.91

To get from Byron Moulton's ox-cart ride in 1876 to Scott Leighton's paintings two decades later required a revolution in attitudes. In America's centennial year, the public still viewed leisure and the aristocrats who enjoyed it with deep suspicion. As the pace of work and life in urban, industrial society quickened during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the leisurely world of the European aristocracy seemed quintessentially alien.


I have found no documentary evidence to confirm that patrons of the resort ever hunted for sport with horses and hounds. In fact, at the time Leighton painted the portraits, guests were probably more likely to take a morning ride in a carriage or on a bike than on a horse. The paintings may have depicted activities emanating from Norton Pope's stable and kennel on White Oak Hill.

91 Mrozek, Sport and American Mentality, 105-7; Rader, "Quest for Subcommunities," 357-66.
century, however, free time began to gain first utility and then legitimacy. Nostalgia for simpler times, when work and play were less differentiated, and the desire to reconnect man with nature provided a romantic, antimodern sanction to recreation. The arguments that exercise improved health and competition built character contributed a rational, more modern justification. As cultural constraints against leisure eroded further, even the pursuit of pleasure became an acceptable end of recreation. This revolution in thought in turn gave birth to a new leisure class, whose participation in recreational activities helped to define its identity and give members their status. Moreover, the acceptance of leisure’s legitimacy added yet another element to the landscape of the Poland Spring resort. Superimposed upon the pastoral landscape Byron Moulton found in 1876 was the recreational landscape Scott Leighton painted in the 1890s.
CHAPTER IX

THE MAINE STATE BUILDING: TOWARD AN URBAN VISION

Golfers played the final hole of the course in the shadow of the Maine State Building. Home to a museum, library, newspaper, and art gallery, the facility epitomized the modern urbane vision that made up one pole of the vivid contrasts. Here guests could pass their leisure time in suitably genteel fashion: reading books and literary magazines, studying specimens of natural history, admiring paintings and sculptures, and examining the surrounding architecture. In short, here culture was king. No other building or landscape at the resort better symbolized the transformation of the hilltop into a summer city.

The Maine State Building had its origin in the White City constructed in conjunction with the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Planned as a model city in counterpoise to the haphazardly evolved, typically problem-plagued host city of Chicago, the fair grounds demonstrated the possibilities of coordinating space and structures, beauty and utility, and art and technology into urban design. The White City's planners acted out of the conviction that creating an orderly urban environment composed of attractive architecture and edifying institutions, interspersed with tranquil parks and inspiring monuments, could uplift public morals and thereby restore
social order. The hierarchical social structure implied by this conception of the White City was apparent to the editors of the Hill-Top, who applauded the forum provided by the fair for "the free exchange of ideas to the great advantage of all, from the most skilled to the most ignorant."¹

Although the occasion of the fair elevated the idea of civic design to the status of a full-blown movement, its antecedents predated the opening of the exposition. The Rickers, for example, had banked on the regenerative effect of "aesthetic betterment" long before 1893. Thus, the very urban vision that transformed Poland Spring into a summer city helped make possible the incorporation of the White City. As Jon A. Peterson has argued, many small-scale, piecemeal projects in support of municipal art, civic improvement, and outdoor art during the late nineteenth century inspired the city beautiful movement. According to his scenario, the White City represented the earliest fruition of the movement, rather than its point of origination. In the aftermath of the fair, the values and lessons of urban planning applied in Chicago

and carried forward into the city beautiful movement returned to the hilltop with renewed vigor.²

Indeed, promoters of Poland Spring well understood the philosophy of the city beautiful movement. In 1897 the Hill-Top distilled its essence to the dictum: "Admire the beautiful, and make things beautiful that they may be admired." An editorial in the paper commented that "cities should be made beautiful as well as substantial; streets and roads should be made permanent and kept in perfect condition." The resort itself provided ample evidence of the beneficial effects of civic beauty. Although the hilltop became "quite a metropolitan center" as nine hundred to one thousand patrons and employees bustled about on any given day during the summer, it was a city without disturbances, jails, policemen, or alarms. The Hill-Top attributed the absence of turmoil to the presence of "every other peaceful requirement of a city including a public library and art gallery."³

³"Editorial," Hill-Top, 8 August 1897, 8; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 6.


Incorporation is the metaphor employed by Alan Trachtenberg to explain the transformation of Gilded-Age America. In the case of the Columbian Exposition, he has contended that the event's characteristic order, unity, coherence, and hierarchy resulted from the incorporation of business, political, industrial, and cultural interests.
Intended to commemorate the four-hundredth anniversary of the European discovery of the Americas, the Columbian Exposition amounted to a grand tribute to progress. Not even a devastating business depression could dampen public interest in the immensely popular national celebration, although it did postpone the opening of the fair from October of 1892 until May 1, 1893. The backdrop of Chicago, used to brilliant effect by Frederick Jackson Turner in his seminal address to the American Historical Association during the course of the fair, served as symbolic evidence of the progress made in civilizing the American frontier. The White City stood as monumental evidence of the progress reformers hoped would tame the new frontier of the urban jungle. The midway manifested ample evidence of the progress made in the pursuit of leisure. Additionally, the exhibition halls offered abundant evidence of the progress made in the application of technology to the production of material goods. According to the Hill-Top, the event spotlighted "the consensus of American ideas, in the advancement of Art, Science, Engineering, Literature, [and] Mechanics."

Demonstrating the "general progress of the State of Maine" was precisely what the State Legislature had in mind when it created a Board of World's Fair Managers in 1891. The nine-member committee entrusted a native son who had followed

the course of empire westward, Charles Sumner Frost, with the assignment to design a showcase for objects illustrating the "history, progress, moral and material welfare and future development" of Maine. Born in Lewiston in 1856 and trained in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Frost had ventured to Chicago in 1881 and formed a partnership with Henry Ives Cobb the following year. A decade later, Frost's plan for his native state's headquarters at the White City beat out five other submissions.5

The Queen-Anne-style, three-story, octagonal pavilion was constructed at a cost of somewhere between $18,000 and $30,000 from native granite, slate, and wood supplied by fifteen Maine companies. Finished with Colonial-Revival woodwork, the interior featured a large rotunda surrounded by six rooms on the first floor for the relaxation of visitors, six exhibit spaces on the second floors for the presentation of "the natural and industrial products of the State," and six alcoves on the unfinished third floor. Over the fireplace and oak mantelpiece opposite the entrance appeared the Rickers' contribution to the artistic decor of the building -- Scott

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Leighton's painting honoring the sporting set, "A Morning Ride at Poland Spring."

In addition to the picture and the display of water in the Agricultural Building, Hiram Ricker and Sons had a presence at the exposition in the form of a souvenir booklet. The Board of Managers had designated the promotion "of the unsurpassed summer resorts of Maine" as one of its main goals. To that end, it formed a Committee on Summer Resorts and funded it with a budget of $1000. The committee contracted with George Haynes of Portland to produce 30,000 copies of "a book illustrative and descriptive of Maine summer resorts, her manufacturing and industrial interests." Distributed at the fair, the publication became a "highly prized" item.

Haynes included in The State of Maine, in 1893 a two-page spread on the Poland Spring resort. A montage of five illustrations filled the first page: one each of the Mansion, Poland Spring, and Spring Houses, as well as a scene of Middle Range Pond and the hilltop, and a view of the western Maine mountains from Ricker Hill. The accompanying text praised the Mansion House for its "home comforts," identified the big

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hotel as "the Palace Summer Hotel of New England," claimed that the water was "superior to any of the spas in Europe," described the hilltop as "the centre of a beautiful and picturesque park," and depicted the mountain scenery as blue hills blended with "the azure heavens." The tribute concluded with the assurance that "to be a guest of this famous and justly celebrated summer resort is to realize the ideal possibilities of health, rest and pleasure."8

The White City Comes to the Summer City

At the conclusion of the exposition, the Maine Board faced the vexing question of what to do with the building. When the Park Commissioners of Chicago rejected an offer to assume control of the facility, it seemed doomed to become "a white elephant." Choosing from several options for the building's future, the managers enthusiastically accepted the enterprising plan submitted by the Rickers. The family proposed relocating the structure from Jackson Park to Poland Spring, where it would stand "as a memorial to the national fair" and "become the crowning feature of the opening of . . . the second century of the Ricker inns." In addition to serving as a home to an envisioned library, museum, and gallery, the building amounted to a trophy affirming the pre-

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eminence of Poland Spring as the leading summer resort in Maine.'

Facing a nineteen-day deadline to vacate the fair grounds, workmen had to disassemble the building hurriedly, while adhering to a method of marking and cataloguing the pieces described as "systematic in the extreme." Under the supervision of Hiram W. Ricker and at an expense of $3000, the crew identified each of the eleven courses of granite masonry with a letter and each stone with a number. Every single scrap of building material, whether broken or not, was loaded aboard a special train of sixteen cars and sent via the Grand Trunk Railroad on a three-day journey to Maine.10

The Rickers chose a spot at the edge of the oak grove between the Mansion and Poland Spring Houses as the new home for the Maine State Building. "Crowning the summit of this noble eminence," the pavilion reportedly overlooked "as fair and as grand a picture as that spread out about it in the 'White City,' and with harmonious surroundings." By August of 1894, work on the project was "being pushed rapidly." With the foundation nearly complete, the cornerstone was ceremonially laid on August 14th. The event drew a large number of 


10Dutch, ed., Maine State Building, 26, 42; Poland Spring Centennial, 68; "Maine State Building," Hill-Top, 30 June 1895, 2-3.
guests who also witnessed the placement of coins, promotional
literature on the resort, pictures of the proprietors, and a
collection of *Lewiston Journals* and *Hill-Tops* in a time
capsule deposited at the site.\textsuperscript{11}

During the following winter and spring, the resort’s head
carpenter, Forrest Walker, oversaw the thorough reconstruction
of the building. With the exception of the addition of three
dormer windows between the four corner turrets, the exterior
was faithfully rebuilt. On the inside, workers slightly
altered the arrangement of partitions on the first and second
floors, finished off the third floor, and paid "great atten-
tion" to fireproofing the interior, making sure all the while
to preserve the harmony of the original design. By the summer
of 1895, the facility was ready to reopen.\textsuperscript{12}

To commemorate the occasion, the Rickers organized a gala
weekend of festivities. "The greatest event that Poland ever
witnessed" commenced on a foggy Saturday at the end of June
with the arrival of numerous invited guests. By the end of
the day, politicians, artists, and "men and women whose names
are familiar in other walks of life" filled the Poland Spring
House to overflowing. That evening many of the visitors
attended a dance in the music hall. In spite of "low skies,

\textsuperscript{11}"Maine State Building," *Hill-Top*, 30 June 1895, 2;
*Poland Spring Centennial*, 75; *Hill-Top*, 12 August 1894, 6;

\textsuperscript{12}Dutch, ed., *Maine State Building*, 26, 41-2; *Poland
Spring Centennial*, 78; "Maine State Building," *Hill-Top*, 30
June 1895, 3.
and threats of impending unpleasantries," the distinguished invitees spent a leisurely Sunday listening to the "excellent" music of the orchestra and driving about Poland Hill."

Dedication day, Monday July 1st, dawned to superb weather. By eleven in the morning, crowds had gathered in the oak grove. The Rickers and speakers made their way to the platform erected at the entrance of the Maine State Building, which three artists had decked out especially for the occasion. At about quarter after eleven, the ceremony got underway with a patriotic overture played by a band. Thereafter, Judge Joseph W. Symonds of Portland, a retired justice of the State Supreme Court, stepped forward as master of ceremonies to deliver some introductory remarks.

In keeping with the commemorative theme of the centennial celebration, Symonds set the tone with his nostalgic comments. The judge recalled the "common splendor of the New England past" and the Ricker family's share "in the common glory of New England life." More than a geographic entity, New England was for him the bastion of gentility, "where liberty and learning, the graces of culture and refinement, strength and nobility of character, all the best results of civilization, have grown and flourished." "More than a mere monument of the past," the Maine State Building as an extension of the values

13"Dedication of the Maine State Building," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 1.

14Ibid.
embodied in the White City pointed to "the way of the future."  

Collectively, the ten speakers who followed the master of ceremonies to the podium laid out the vivid contrasts that had shaped the hilltop over the past one hundred years. As Representative Nelson Dingley, Jr., put it, the resort was "a great transformation scene," where both "the lovers of learning and lovers of scenery" were accommodated. Some speeches, informed by the tenets of modernism, appealed to the former group, as they paid homage to progress, culture, and the White City. Other talks, containing strains of antimodernism, resounded with the notes of nostalgia, romanticism, and antiurbanism that appealed to the lovers of scenery.  

Sustaining the nostalgic mood introduced by Judge Symonds, Senator William Frye reviewed the history of the Rickers in Poland Spring in his "charming inimitable" address. Having settled the Maine frontier at a time before schoolhouses and roads, when pioneers contended with wild forests, untamed beasts, and rocky soil, the family represented a study in success. In one century, the Rickers had transformed the site of "a mere cabin" into a resort featuring "the finest structure of a summer hotel in the United States of America." Frye attributed the rise of the family to the labors of "the stern old Puritan of a father," Hiram Ricker; the lessons

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taught by the well-educated, firm-willed, wise, discreet, and blessed mother, Janette Ricker; and the work done by the stalwart Ricker sons, Edward, Alvan, and Hiram. He also ascribed the lessons of success to nature, specifically to the hardships dealt by the geography of Maine. Among the most important "fruit gathered from the rocky hill-side farms of the dear old Pine Tree State," Frye contended, were the virtues of hard work, economy, thrift, temperance, patience, perseverance, courage, and faith.17

It was left to General Augustus P. Martin to point out that nature had value beyond the hardships it sometimes imposed. The State of Maine's reputation "as the most

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The characterization of Hiram Ricker as a Puritan, obviously outdated from a theological standpoint, demonstrated the ability of the colonial revival movement to reshape the understanding of the past. As Celia Betsky has observed, "Puritan came to stand for pureness, for social, moral, and sexual purity." Understood in this context, Frye's reference to Hiram Ricker as a Puritan suggested the prominence of the search for purity as a cultural objective during the Gilded Age.

The reference to Janette Ricker as a "grand woman" and "blessed teacher" reflected the power of the cult of domesticity to define the meaning of motherhood. A dozen years after her death, the matriarch of the family still commanded the attention of friends and family. The day after the dedication ceremony, in fact, Cynthia and Sarah Ricker, accompanied by Cynthia Nay, one of Janette's sisters, made a pilgrimage to their mother's childhood home in East Rumford, Maine.
delightful and invigorating summer resort" on the continent confirmed the power of "unsurpassed natural scenery" to renew the health and strength of "the worn and weary all over the land." Furthermore, the clean air and fresh water in abundance on the hilltop demonstrated the "cleansing and purifying qualities" of nature. Contemptuously dismissing the "cold and scientific" modern approach to nature, Martin called for a revival of the ancient understanding of nature as a "romantic story." His own romanticism led him to portray Poland Spring as a "grand cathedral of its Maker," where the soul became "purer, stronger, more enduring, more powerful, more helpful, and more hopeful."18

Martin's view of nature, based upon nostalgic memories of his youth on Bald Hill in nearby New Gloucester, contrasted starkly with the view of urban life gained during his work as a Boston Police Commissioner. Nature was spiritual, poetical, and ethereal; the city was a place of heartless materialism, daily drudgery, and prosiness. The "calm sunshine," he believed, would make harried moderns "forget the battles, the downfalls, the cuts and scars of life's great fight." Martin hoped that his romantic remarks would help awaken man's better nature and divert "the flow of his mind from the channel of his daily avocation into that higher, broader, purer sphere of life which shall know no change."19

19Ibid., 41-4.
Senator Eugene Hale expressed similarly antiurban sentiments in his speech, although with less gravity and more wit. Apostrophizing the Maine State Building, he thanked the Lord that his "young friend" had made it out of Chicago. The Senator likened the move to exchanging "an election riot in the lower streets of New York City" for "the placidity of a Shaker meeting here in the State of Maine." Addressing his subject directly, Hale advised the building that "you ought to be glad that you are rid of noise, my young friend, and temptation, and anarchists, my young friend, and that you have come down here where nature sits at her best and broods lovingly over such a scene as human eyes have rarely witnessed."

For Governor Henry B. Cleaves, the foremost message of the centennial was progress, uninterrupted, unambiguously positive progress. It was a favorite theme of the Governor. At the original dedication of the Maine State Building in Chicago, Cleaves had heralded the progress of "the good old mother State" and the American Republic. On this day, too, he paid tribute to "the rapid progress of this great North American Republic," which he described in forceful language that made "an excellent impression" on his audience as "the best, the grandest, the purest, the noblest republic that was ever given to the world." The Governor also praised "the

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20"Dedication of the Maine State Building," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 3; Eugene Hale, "Address," in Addresses, 14.

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noble sons of Hiram Ricker" for their liberality, earnestness, energy, and most of all, progressiveness. By dedicating the Maine State Building to "the cause of education," the Governor contended, the Rickers made possible "streams of light, of brightness and wisdom" that would strengthen the home, the citizen, society, the town, the city, the commonwealth, and ultimately, the republic.21

The connection between progress and culture also served as the basis for the remarks of the Honorable William P. Whitehouse, a Justice of the Maine Supreme Court. In the judge's opinion, the accomplishments of the "magnificent enterprise" at Poland Spring rivaled the "rushing tide of progress" witnessed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the fields of business, art, and science. He especially lauded the Rickers for advancing "the tide of intelligent social life" at the resort. Indeed, Whitehouse reckoned the ability to combine successfully the vivid contrasts of entertainment and culture "the genius of the Ricker family." As he suggested through clever prose, nature and knowledge would intertwine in the Maine State Building. The judge envisioned that thousands of guests would "breathe the air from the treasure rooms of literature and inhale learning as they walk amid the foliage of a well-filled library, where the odor of leather-scented volumes will be as

'fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples that grew amid the happy orchard.'"^{22}

Two of the speakers focused on the origins of the Maine State Building in the White City. Representing the Governor of Massachusetts, Judge Advocate General Edgar R. Champlin recalled the Celestial City that had sprung up in Chicago "with the whiteness of the lily of the valley." It seemed entirely appropriate to him that the pavilion now stood amidst "a city upon a hill," for both cities exemplified the achievements of planning and design. Marveling at the waterworks, electric-light station, beautiful buildings, and natural attractions at the resort, Champlin concluded: "This has not happened by chance. There has been one mind planning, one mind working, and that mind is the mind of the Rickers." True to the values of the city beautiful movement, Champlin prophesied that the facility being dedicated would better prepare visitors "for the duties of citizenship" and "impress on the minds and hearts of those who come here the great truths of American liberty and American freedom."^{23}

Likewise, the sight of the Maine State Building transported Representative Charles A. Boutelle back to "that magical White City on the borders of Lake Michigan." His visit to the Columbian Exposition had made a deep impression. The Congressman called it "the grandest creation of human

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genius and enterprise and . . . the most beautiful spectacle ever offered to mortal gaze." He hoped that the salvaged remnant of the fair would freely radiate the influences of art and literature and thereby, vivify the "spirit of Americanism." Boutelle equated this sentiment with the "love of country and love of home" that had made the United States "the most magnificent republic in the annals of mankind." 24

As Boutelle and several other dedication day speakers had suggested, the Maine State Building was intended to "monumentalize the presence of culture" at Poland Spring. Defined during the Gilded Age as the pursuit of social refinement, aesthetic sensibilities, and higher learning, culture was the keystone of order. The facility promoted order by providing a home for the institutions of genteel culture. The Rickers had the parlors, smoking rooms, and reception areas on the first floor converted into display spaces, reading and writing rooms, a library, and a newspaper office. In addition, the previously unused third floor became the site of a thriving art gallery. Under the auspices of the Rickers, the building was set to encourage "the advancement and the perpetuation of Art and Literature." 25

At the conclusion of the round of speeches, guests headed toward the Maine State Building for a first-hand inspection of

25 Trachtenberg, 143-4; Poland Spring Centennial, 76; "The Reading Room," Hill-Top, 26 July 1896, 1.
the facility that had caused the orators to wax so eloquent about its virtuous potential. Two black slate, gold-lettered, three-foot-tall tablets presented by a Portland admirer of the Rickers greeted visitors at the front doorway. The one on the right credited the family with removing the structure from the World’s Columbian Exposition; the one on the left honored the family for a century of residence on the hilltop.26

Inside, large, framed photographs of fair scenes lining the walls of the rotunda visually reminded viewers of the building’s former home. Supplemented by smaller pictures that extended into the rooms of the first floor, the panoramic display told "in full pictorial detail the story of the Exposition." The placement of "A Morning Ride" over the fireplace mantelpiece provided yet another link to the structure’s time in Chicago. Comfortable furnishings, including twenty-two types of rattan chairs and tete-a-tetes; tasteful fittings; valuable art treasures; elegant adornments; and an artistic floral arrangement, all of which won the admiration of onlookers, filled out the first floor. Ascending the colonial staircase, visitors discovered that the second floor had been converted into two, three-room, guest suites to accommodate the overflow from the Mansion and Poland

26"Dedication of the Maine State Building," Hill-Top, 7 July 1895, 3; Poland Spring Centennial, 75-6.
Spring Houses. Up one more flight, they came upon a gallery space "admirably lighted and designed."  

As guests filed out after their tour of the building, they made their way to the dining room of the Poland Spring House to partake of one of the Rickers' famous grand banquets. After feasting on entrees ranging from boiled Penobscot River salmon to larded roast brant duck with bread sauce, many of the diners proceeded to the music hall. There, they listened politely to the poem "Wanderers of Maine" written especially for the occasion by Julia H. May. An evening of music and dancing then commenced. Outfitted in their finest silk and satin costumes, the assembled ladies looked charming, attractive, and elegant. The fawning *Hill-Top* gushed that their "gowns were only exceeded in beauty by their own lovely faces and forms." The gentlemen cut dashing figures as well. The paper wrote of them that "a finer looking body of men it is rare to see grace any event." The ball made for an impressive display of genteel culture and thus, a fitting conclusion to the dedication of the Maine State Building."  

**The Museum**

The Maine State Building functioned in part as a museum with the purpose of educating the resort's patrons. The

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"Dedication of the Maine State Building," *Hill-Top*, 7 July 1895, 5; *Poland Spring Centennial*, 76, 78.

"Dedication of the Maine State Building," *Hill-Top*, 7 July 1895, 3-5.
rotunda gradually filled up with an evergrowing assortment of souvenirs, curios, and pictures collected by the Rickers and donated by well-wishers. Two officials of the Pennsylvania Insurance Company, for example, presented the family with a valuable and beautiful Japanese vase. Measuring five feet in height and over six feet in circumference at its widest, the object was apprized by a New York art dealer as "one of the largest ever brought to this country." Guest D. W. Thompson of Bridgeport, Connecticut, meanwhile, had sent an autographed portrait of and elegantly bound book about his father-in-law, "the prince of showmen," P. T. Barnum. 29

The picture of the patron saint of the American museum and Victorian popular culture joined an impressive pantheon of respectable gentlemen. One wall honored Presidents Washington, Lincoln, and McKinley, as well as Vice President Garret A. Hobart, whose family regularly visited the resort. Most of the dozens of portraits, however, paid tribute to native sons of Maine. The nationally prominent Neal Dow, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Hannibal Hamlin, Thomas B. Reed, and James Blaine shared wall space with pictures of the entire Congressional delegation of the state, nine of the eleven dedication day speakers, several members of the state judiciary, and one highly valued, Maine-born guest, Crosby Noyes. 30

29"Some Valuable Presents," Hill-Top, 29 August 1897, 5.

30"Poland Spring’s Treasure-House," Hill-Top, 23 August 1903, 2.
The famous moderns watched over glass cases securing the relics of anonymous ancients. "A large and valuable" display of local Indian artifacts manifested an interest in natural history; so, too, did the lofty presence of a mounted Maine moose head and stuffed American eagle above the fireplace. Flora, as well as fauna, decorated the rotunda. Throughout the room stood jardinières of wild flowers and cultivated plants purposefully placed with an eye toward providing patrons with many pleasing views.31

Due to the abundance of floral displays, one entire room on the first floor was devoted to botanical exhibits. The fern room, so named because of a decorative frieze featured there, owed its existence to the work of Kate Furbish. An amateur botany enthusiast from Brunswick, Maine, Furbish had gained a reputation for the water-color illustrations she painted of her discoveries. In 1893 the Rickers appointed Furbish the resort’s resident botanist and furnished her with living arrangements and studio space. In exchange, the proprietors assigned her the duties of gathering samples of local wild flowers and preparing a pamphlet for the benefit of guests. Furbish had the impression that the real reason for her presence was to provide "for the amusement of the half invalid." Despite her reservations about the intent of the project, she faithfully recorded in a journal the location and

31"The Library," Hill-Top, 18 August 1901, 2; "A Poland Institution," Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 1; "The Reading Room," Hill-Top, 26 July 1896, 1.
flowering dates of the plant species found within a three-mile radius of the hilltop throughout the summer. By the end of her first season of collecting at Poland Spring, Furbish had catalogued 563 specimens.32

Furbish returned to the resort the next two summers and added to her inventory. When the Maine State Building opened, her herbarium had grown to over six hundred plants, each of which she had mounted and identified with a specially printed label. Described as "a labor of love," the "exquisitely-prepared" exhibit was sure "to delight the botanist," the Hill-Top predicted. It certainly delighted the paper, which promoted Furbish's work as "the only collection of 'wild flowers' ever on exhibition at any hotel in the world." Although she never produced the pamphlet that had originally brought her to the resort, Furbish did head off to the Portland Museum of Natural History a few days after the dedication of the Maine State Building to present a pair of papers on the flora of Poland Spring to a gathering of nearly one hundred fellow botanical enthusiasts. In the years to come, Furbish continued to scour the surrounding countryside until her finds numbered 732 different varieties of plants.33

32"Poland Institution," Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 2; Hill-Top, 30 June 1895, 4; Ada Graham and Frank Graham, Jr., Kate Furbish and the Flora of Maine (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 1995), 111-2; Poland Spring Centennial, 86.

33Graham and Graham, Kate Furbish, 114-21; "Reading Room," Hill-Top, 26 July 1896, 3; "The Only One," Hill-Top, 4 August 1895, 8; "The Library," Hill-Top, 18 August 1901, 2.
The herbarium attracted "much interest." Furbish's specimens were exhibited forty-eight at a time and were rotated weekly. The display had the desired effect of inspiring guests to develop an appreciation for "Nature's garden." Soon after the opening of the Maine State Building, the Hill-Top reported that Mrs. B. F. Redfern had collected two uncataloged plants in West Poland. By the time of her return to Boston at the end of August, the appropriately named Redfern had made several more "valuable additions" to the botanical collection.34

Wild flowers were not the only specimens that comprised the herbarium. In 1897 Dr. Schuyler displayed some of the mushrooms he had gathered. Responding in 1900 to a woman at the resort who had shown "a little interest" in plant life, Furbish prepared a list of over thirty mushrooms she had collected between 1896 and 1899 in the woods leading to the pumping station at Poland Spring. Furbish closed her letter with a note of satisfaction, writing that "it makes me very happy to learn that there is even one who enjoys these interesting plants."35

Besides botanicals, other specimens of the natural world contributed to "the line of progression" at Poland Spring.

34"Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 25 August 1895, 10; "The Library," Hill-Top, 18 August 1901, 2; "Botanical," Hill-Top, 28 July 1895, 2.
35"Tid-Bits," Hill-Top, 5 September 1897, 12; Kate Furbish, "Mushrooms," Hill-Top, 12 August 1900, 3.
The fern room also contained three large cases "for the
display of a magnificent collection of minerals of superior
value." This exhibit also "attracted a vast deal of atten-
tion." It focused on products of local mines such as tourma-
line from Mt. Mica in Paris, Maine, and quartz from Mt.
Apatite in Auburn. Although the Hill-Top claimed that the
common Maine gems rivaled "the diamond in beauty and bril-
liance," rare minerals such as a gold nugget from the Klondike
and meteorite fragments from Canyon Diablo in Arizona and the
Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico most captivated observ-
ers.36

The same role that Kate Furbish played in teaching about
plants, E. R. Chadbourn of Lewiston played in teaching about
minerals. The mineralogist visited the Maine State Building
each Thursday during the summer season to answer questions
about the exhibit. He also supplied the Hill-Top with
information for its columns on minerals, which he sometimes
authored himself. In his absence, the curious could consult
copies of the "Complete Mineral Catalogue" Chadbourn offered
for sale.37

36"Minerals," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 19; "Poland Institu-
tion," Hill-Top, 3 September 1899, 2; "Minerals," Hill-Top, 25
July 1897, 7; "The Minerals," Hill-Top, 18 July 1897, 10;
"Mineral Exhibit Notes," Hill-Top, 21 August 1898, 3.

37"Minerals," Hill-Top, 2 July 1899, 19; Hill-Top, 8 July
1900, 15; "Minerals About Poland," Hill-Top, 19 August 1900,
11; "Mineral Exhibit Notes," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 3.
As so often happened at Poland Spring, consumer culture subsumed genteel culture. While Chadbourn tried to encourage appreciation for the scientific and aesthetic value of the gems, "the fortune-seeking appetite" generated much of their allure. Guests could purchase, as well as view, the minerals in the Maine State Building. The Hill-Top promoted them as "attractive souvenirs -- suitable for the cabinet, the mantel or the centre-table." Besides their place in home decoration, gems also added to personal decoration as pieces of jewelry. Beyond their serviceability as articles of conspicuous consumption, minerals even had utility as mundane household tools such as paper weights and letter openers.3

To augment the collections in the fern room, the Hill-Top solicited donations of natural curiosities. In particular, the paper sought specimens from Maine's forests, quarries, and mines so that the hundreds of people who passed through the museum exhibits each summer would gain more familiarity with "the natural wealth of the state." The plea produced at least two contributions. James H. Chadbourn of Wilmington, North Carolina, presented shark bones, teeth, and shells brought up

from an artesian well in his hometown. Frank L. Castner added a butterfly collection to the museum. 39

The Library

Like the Maine State Building itself, the Rickers considered the library housed in it one of the unique features that made their resort so distinctive. When the family acquired the structure in 1894, it gained 175 books in the bargain. Supplemented by 97 volumes of "old works" donated by Mrs. J. D. Fessenden, this constituted the extent of the collection on opening day. The books were placed in glass cases in one of the first-floor rooms that also doubled as the librarian's office. The office was situated off of the rotunda, where a long table contained "the current periodical literature of the day," comfortable rattan furniture invited occupancy, and many pleasant nooks provided places to lounge and read. "A free circulation of air and a constant changing of the atmosphere," made possible by the abundance of open space, added to the ambience of the reading room. 40

Spurred on by the contribution of 138 "standard" titles from General Augustus Martin, who backed up his idealistic rhetoric with philanthropic deeds, and another 75 classics

39 "A Suggestion," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 2; "Natural Curiosities," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 3; "The Library," Hill-Top, 18 August 1901, 2.

from Mrs. H. O. Bright, the library grew to 854 books by the end of the first season. Five years later, the count stood at almost three thousand. Nearly three hundred "interested guests," led by the generous General Martin and public-spirited Senator Frye, had donated virtually the entire collection. Another "highly prized feature of the institution" was the extensive selection of periodicals available to read. The library subscribed to the "standard and current" magazines of the day, including the Atlantic Monthly, Harper's Monthly, Ladies' Home Journal, London Illustrated News, New England Magazine, North American Review, Scientific American, and Youth's Companion.41

Guests had access to the library between 9 AM and 9 PM on weekdays and 10 AM and 8:30 PM on Sundays. An honor system rather than rigid rules governed use of the facility. Because of the limited size of the collection and short duration of the season, patrons could only borrow one book at a time and had to return it within one week. Delinquents had little to worry about, however, as the library charged no fees, required no deposits, and collected no fines. In spite of the lax operating procedures, the system worked. Six years passed before the first book disappeared.42


Frank Carlos Giffith of Roxbury, Massachusetts, served as the librarian for all but six summers between 1895 and 1929. During the remainder of the year, the native of Dixfield, Maine, was a theatrical agent, his most famous client being actress Minnie Maddern Fiske. Between 1895 and 1900, a succession of assistants helped the librarian. In 1896 Mrs. Griffith joined her husband in the library; the following season, Robert Marsh, a grandson of Hiram and Janette Ricker, filled the role.43

Griffith meticulously attended to his duties. Arriving before opening time, he raised the curtains to their proper height, dated the guest register, filled the inkwells, sharpened the pencils, unlocked the bookcases, straightened the shelves, and laid out the periodicals. On slow days, the librarian had time to repair, rebind, and reshelve books. More often, however, he entertained a steady stream of visitors. In retrospect, Griffith humorously related that a typical day consisted of explaining to an argumentative patron why he or she could not borrow more books, finding out for an inquisitive lady the maiden name of King Tut's wife, explaining to a skeptical stranger the origins of the Japanese vase

43"Out of the Misty Past," Hill-Top, 31 July 1926, 5; [Frank Carlos Griffith], Copybook, Poland Spring Library, Maine State Building, Poland Spring, ME, 1902-3, 348, DeWolfe and Wood, Alfred, ME; "Mrs. Fiske and Mary of Magdala," Hill-Top, 30 August 1903, 14-5.

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on display in the rotunda, and helping giggling young girls find inspiration for the upcoming costume party."

The demands of dealing with patrons did not prevent Griffith from compiling detailed records. He could furnish an array of statistics calculated to impress: the busiest and slowest days of the week (Sunday and Tuesday in August of 1897, but Saturday and Wednesday in June of 1899), the record for the busiest single day (the 72 books taken out on Monday, August 24, 1896), the record for the highest daily average for an entire week (43 volumes per day during the fourth week of August in 1897), the average daily circulation by month (19 in June of 1899), the number of books checked out each summer month from 1896 to 1900, and the total volumes circulated each season between 1895 and 1900."

Griffith also found the time to classify and account for each volume by subject matter. The majority of books fit into one of three categories: light fiction, classics, or public documents. The abundance of the last classification owed mainly to the donations from Sen. Frye. The relative percentage of subject matter remained fairly constant between 1896

""The Librarian's First Hour," Hill-Top, 25 August 1923, 3.

and 1900, with one notable exception. The percentage of fiction dramatically increased by nearly half."

Because it ran counter to the cultural objectives of the White City, the growing popularity of "light" fiction, with its emphasis on entertainment and pleasure rather than education and uplift, increasingly concerned the editors of the Hill-Top. Reviewing the library’s circulation figures in 1905, the paper reported that eighty percent of the books checked out fell into the classification of light fiction, thirteen percent were by "standard" writers, and the remaining seven percent represented other categories. At a loss to explain the statistics, the editors termed the reading habits of the resort's patrons an enigma."

By 1909 the concern had blossomed into full-fledged alarm. An editorial in the Hill-Top initialed by EBS dismissed light and interesting books as drugs that "dull the

""The Library," Hill-Top, 18 August 1901, 2.


mind into a torpor of unnatural sentiment or excitement." Shifting metaphors, the editorialist then likened light fiction to sugar and the nutritious literary classics to broiled filet of beef. The essential ingredient distinguishing the two genres was realism. The writer viewed the book as "the guiding friend in whom we see the world as in a mirror." Its purpose was to uplift -- to raise the reader above "the horizon of human existence." EBS, therefore, championed the merits of Irving, Hawthorne, Thackeray, Dickens, Balzac, and Scott -- authors whose works waited "to reward some reader with cross-sections of real throbbing life."

To a great extent, the popularity of light fiction stemmed from changes in the publishing field. Noting the power of commerce to overshadow art in modern times, the Hill-Top detailed the formula for publishing a successful novel: create "an artistically designed cover," choose an appealing title, select plain and distinct type, make use of ample margins and generous spacing, and finally, include excellent illustrations. The story was secondary. A book "started rolling with good and well advised advertising," particularly a testimonial from a well-known personality, was certain to gain "a vogue many a better book will hunger for," the

"EBS, "Editorial," Hill-Top, 11 July 1909, 8-9."
editorial cynically observed. Once again, consumer culture trumped genteel culture at the city of vivid contrasts."

The Newspaper

The Maine State Building also served as headquarters for the Hill-Top, the official arbiter, chronicler, and promoter of genteel culture at the resort. Conceived in 1894, the newspaper was the brainchild of two enterprising employees of the Poland Spring House, Harry T. Jordan, an office worker, and Don Freeman, the head bellman. They were assisted in the endeavor by Holman Day, who wrote the lead article for the first issue; Benjamin Keith, Mr. E. J. Stellwagen, and Joseph Sawyer, who gathered newsworthy information on fellow guests; Nelson Dingley, who made the presses of his Lewiston Journal available to the editors; and many Lewiston and Auburn merchants, who agreed to place ads in the new publication. The main backer of the enterprise was Hiram Ricker, who agreed to buy $250 worth of advertising in the periodical if, and only if, Jordan and Freeman published ten issues. They exceeded the quota by one. When Edward Ricker finally paid the bill, he joked that he would gladly trade the profits of the Poland Spring House for those of the Hill-Top.50

50""The Hill-Top Twenty-Six Years Ago," Hill-Top, 31 July 1920, 8.
The stated purpose of the editors was to publish a paper that served "the interests of the Poland Spring Hotels and their visitors." To that end, they pledged in the first issue to "present a bright, clean, newsy, readable publication." In addition, they promised to tackle the challenge with "hard, faithful, conscientious work." Jordan and Freeman hoped that the result of their efforts would "be worthy of representing one of the grandest, most magnificent and liberally managed hotel resorts in the country."51

The editors put out issues for eleven weeks from July to September. The deadline for submitting material was Thursday and soon thereafter, the resort's courier, Frank Chaffin, set out to take the finished copy to the Lewiston Journal Printing Office. The Hill-Top hit the newsstand on Sunday morning. Readers could purchase single copies for ten cents or they could subscribe for the season by paying one dollar. The latter option allowed guests who could not stay for the entire summer to keep up on the social and cultural activities taking place at the resort.52

The paper was well received. Issues sold like "proverbial hot cakes," sometimes requiring second printings to meet the demand. The expanding length of the Hill-Top and the rising number of advertisers who placed copy in it further demonstrated the popularity of the periodical. From twelve

51 "Editorial," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 4.
52 "Editorial," Hill-Top, 8 September 1895, 4.

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pages in 1894, the publication grew steadily in increments of four pages, so that by 1899 each issue featured thirty-two pages. Advertisers increased annually from nineteen in 1894 to ninety-nine in 1900. Most of the 171 businessmen and companies that advertised during the seven-year span were located in either Poland, Auburn, Lewiston, Portland, Boston, or New York. Besides Hiram Ricker and Sons, four advertisers, architect George Coombs, jeweler H. A. Osgood, accountant John O. Rice, and physician Dr. Milton Wedgwood, appeared in issues during all seven years. The main categories of goods and services advertised covered the essentials of leisure-class consumer culture: hotels (23.4 percent), apparel (15.2 percent), furnishings (11.1 percent), foodstuffs (8.8 percent), medicine (8.2 percent), and transportation (8.2 percent).  

On a more subjective level, guest Terence McGowan, himself the editor of the Board of Trade Journal, commented: "there is no resort paper in America that quite equals The Hill-Top." The National Hotel Reporter shared his enthusiasm. "The abundant high-class advertising given it," indicated to the Reporter, "how well business men appreciate its merits." Praising the paper for being "notably attractive, beautifully printed, and beautifully illustrated," the Reporter remarked

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Hill-Top, 2 September 1894, 8.

Miscellaneous categories accounted for another 23.4 percent of the 171 advertisers and unknown categories for the remaining 1.8 percent.
that readers of the Hill-Top were not likely either to throw it away or regard it as useless."

The format and content of the Hill-Top varied little over the years. As Jordan and Freeman had promised in the inaugural issue, each number of the paper opened with "a regular illustrated article on some point of interest about Ricker Hill, or in the vicinity." The feature usually ran two to three pages in length. In addition to the advertisements, each issue also typically included an editorial and a list of the latest arrivals. "Bubbles," which in 1895 became known as "Tid-Bits," served as the combination society and gossip column, or in the more high-toned language of the editors "as a medium of information concerning our guests." Reports on "all dances, hops, and germans; boating, fishing, and riding parties; base-ball games, card parties, entertainments, etc.," rounded out the remainder of each issue."

The seemingly omnipresent Frank Carlos Griffith succeeded Jordan and Freeman as a coeditor of the Hill-Top in 1895. He shared the post until 1906 with Janette "Nettie" Ricker, the youngest child of Hiram and Janette W. Ricker. In addition to fulfilling capably the duties of librarian, Griffith became a driving force behind the paper. During his long tenure, he

"Hill-Top, 25 August 1901, 24; "You’re Another," Hill-Top, 20 August 1899, 3.

"Editorial," Hill-Top, 8 July 1894, 4.
probably wrote most of the lead articles, editorials, art notes, travel accounts, and many of the special articles."

Although the editors encouraged submissions from contributors, few guests took up the invitation. Two who did were authors Jane Patterson and Marcia Bradbury Jordan, both of whom contributed poems. In the eleventh issue of the Hill-Top in 1899, in fact, their works shared the same page in the children's section. Patterson titled her rhyme "Root of the Matter," while Jordan called hers "Little Bluebird." The paper had published two other examples of Patterson's verse, one each in 1897 and 1898. Jordan was more prolific, contributing nine poems all together between 1896 and 1900, as well as two articles in 1900. She collected many of her poems into a booklet, entitled "A Flush of June," that the Hill-Top promoted extensively and enthusiastically and the Rickers offered for sale at the newsstand in the Poland Spring House. Jordan showed her gratitude for the family's sponsorship of her literary career by dedicating a poem to Nettie Ricker, about whom she wrote: "The 'daybreaks' touched with rosy tint...whisper in my ear, The generous loyal thought of her, Whose friendship I hold dear!" 

"Editorial," Hill-Top, 3 September 1905, 8.

"Jane L. Patterson, "Root of the Matter," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 18; Marcia Bradbury Jordan, "Little Bluebird," Hill-Top, 10 September 1899, 18; Hill-Top, 11 September 1898, 12; M. B. J[ordan], "To N. M. R.," Hill-Top, 6 September 1903, 10.
The Art Gallery

The gallery had as its primary objective the cultural elevation of patrons. As adherents of the city beautiful movement, the Rickers knew that art exhibitions were "the rule in all large cities." As architects of a summer city, the family realized it, too, needed to establish a facility "in the interest of advancement in art." Having a gallery at the resort would fill guests with pleasure, serve them up a mental feast, and impress them with "liberal feeling." It also might even provide local residents with "an art education."

The driving force behind the creation of the gallery was Nettie Ricker. When not involved with putting together the Hill-Top, she devoted her time to establishing at the resort an art facility "of high standard and merit." It was the perfect project for a frustrated artist. Like her mother and namesake before her, Nettie fancied herself a painter. She had carried her passion to the point of studying with Robert Vonnoh and Abbott Graves, two accomplished and notable artists of the era. Lack of success in the field, however, eventually sent Nettie into a "decline" that culminated in outright depression. Her brothers hoped to buoy the young woman's spirits by placing her in charge of the gallery in the Maine

State Building, where they intended to display "representative work of representative American painters."59

Nettie eagerly took up the assignment. Unlike exhibition directors at many other galleries, she personally invited artists to contribute rather than accepting unsolicited submissions. Thus, Nettie spent her springtimes traveling to Boston and New York negotiating with artists, selecting works, arranging for their shipment, overseeing their installation, and putting together an exhibition catalog with the help of Frank Carlos Griffith. The day-to-day operation of the gallery and entertainment of visiting artists filled her summers. With the arrival of fall came the tasks of returning the art and planning for the following year's display. Coupled with her involvement with the Hill-Top, it made for a busy year. Her reward was psychological satisfaction. Nettie's labors as gallery director eventually brought her the professional recognition she craved -- associate membership in the Guild of Boston Artists.60

Experimentation characterized the first exhibition. When the Maine State Building opened in July, the six alcoves in the third-floor gallery contained thirty-nine pictures by

59Poland Spring Centennial, 78; Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Prominent Artists at the Poland Springs Art Gallery (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1897), 15; George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered: Recollections of Catharine Lewis Lennihan (Poland Spring, ME: Poland Spring Preservation Society, 1988), 19.

60"Pictures," Hill-Top, 11 September 1898, 2; Ricker and Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 20.
eleven artists. Two months later, the display had grown to fifty-six official entries, three of which had already sold, by nineteen artists. The aggregate value of the works was $13,715. Guests could visit the gallery from 9 AM to 9 PM on weekdays and from 10 AM to 8:30 PM on Sundays. By day, natural sunlight streaming through glass skylights illuminated the space; by night, artificial electric light spotlighted the pictures "to better advantage." Free catalogs available in the library informed viewers about the title and creator of each work.61

Visitors to the gallery in 1895 viewed several pictures related to the hilltop as they made their way to the gallery. On the first floor, they saw "Presidential Range from the Poland Spring House" by S. P. Hodgson in addition to Leighton's "A Morning Ride." Ascending the stairway to the third level, "an excellent watercolor" of the Mansion House by William J. Bixbee and "a thoroughly excellent" painting of the old Ricker school house by Frank H. Shapleigh decorated the balcony. A landscape by Janette W. Ricker, one of "a number of meritorious canvases" she painted during her lifetime, also


In 1903 the Hill-Top reported that the first exhibition contained sixty-six pictures by twenty-five artists.

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graced the space. Included in the exhibition itself were two works by her daughter, Nettie -- one a landscape, the other a still life. The Hill-Top described the latter as "an attractive little picture . . . quiet in its pretensions but effective, and true in its drawing and coloring."

To ensure that the prosperous economic elite and respectable social elite became the competent cultural elite possessing the knowledge to appreciate the works on display, the resort hosted a series of talks on the history of art soon after the gallery opened. In early August, lecturer Carolyn M. Field presented illustrated talks in the reading room. Excellent audiences learned about ancient and classical art, early Christian art, and Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Beginning in 1896, weekly columns in the Hill-Top did their part to educate guests about the virtues of art in general, masterfulness of specific art works, and backgrounds of selected artists.

In the same year, forty-two artists contributed 136 works to the second annual exhibition. The growth in the size of the display paralleled a more expansive view of art. Intending "to do everything possible to encourage the development" of photography, for example, the Hill-Top proposed including

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"Complimentary Art Talks," Hill-Top, 11 August 1895, 10.
pictures taken by guests. The many fine views of natural scenery, "interesting architectural features," "charming groups," and "elaborate turnouts" in the area presented a wealth of artistic possibilities for the owners of Kodak, Quad, Hawkeye, and Detective cameras. The paper made the suggestion more enticing by raising the possibility of awarding "elegant prizes" to the best entries."

Expanding the exhibit and opening it to the new medium of photography paled in significance to a permanent addition to the gallery in 1896. As guests entered the space, "the gentle, sweet and refined features" of Janette W. Ricker greeted them. More than a dozen years after her death, Janette's influence still loomed large on the hilltop. Senator Frye had honored the memory of the "representative American mother" in his remarks at the dedication of the Maine State Building a year earlier. Now the patron saint of art at Poland Spring had a more visible and prominent presence. Both a tribute to her artistry and a shrine to her domesticity, the portrait of the "kindly New England mother" enabled the matriarch of the family to "add a welcome to all visitors, as she did while living."65

64 "Nine Poland Exhibitions," Hill-Top, 6 September 1903, 7; "Art at Poland," Hill-Top, 12 August 1900, 2; "A Photographic Exhibition," Hill-Top, 5 July 1896, 3.

The 1897 exhibition was another large one, displaying 130 pictures by forty-seven artists. Among the new talent to debut was Harriette Wood Robinson, a Lewiston, Maine, native and Auburn, Maine, resident who had studied with D. D. Coombs. Praising Robinson as a "decided talent" and "enthusiastic worker," the Hill-Top reckoned her two submissions, "Strawberries" and "Oranges and Water Bottle," excellent pictures that "should add to her reputation as an artist." Because of her local connections, the paper followed Robinson's career with great interest. In 1898 it reported proudly that her paintings had won four first prizes at the Maine State Fair. The three works she displayed at Poland Spring that year were described as showing "feeling, and an artistic treatment quite equal to the work of many better known artists." The following season, the periodical credited Robinson with continually advancing in her work and ranked her as one of the best still-life artists. Commenting on the two gems contributed by Robinson for the 1900 show, the editors congratulated the

In 1920 a reporter from the Lewiston Journal visited Nettie Ricker at the Mansion House. The resultant article on family heirlooms mentioned the following six paintings and drawings by Janette W. Ricker: Napoleon's ghost, Washington's tomb, "Innocence and Fidelity," "A Dog and a Girl," the county seat of Samuel Billings at Holyoke, and the gorge between Mt. Holyoke and Mt. Tom. The first two works, entitled "A Natural Curiosity at Helena" and "Washington's Tomb," remain in the possession of family members.
artist on "the growing excellence in her work" and placed her paintings "among the works of America's best artists."66

Overall, the number of works included in the exhibitions from season to season fluctuated from the high of 136 in 1896 to a low of 35 in 1899. In part, the changes in scale reflected changes in evaluation standards. "Great progress made in the art of water-color" by 1898 expanded the range of acceptable paintings. In addition, Frank Carlos Griffith welcomed other media of art. The 1898 exhibit featured six sculptures, as well as ninety-nine paintings, an addition that excited increased interest. In the same year, the gallery also displayed twenty-five other artworks paying tribute to the Civil and Spanish American Wars.67

The following season Griffith drastically changed course, opting instead for a more highbrow show. Seeking to "strikingly illustrate the artist's best style and command attention," he only accepted large oil paintings of "exhibition"


67 "Nine Poland Exhibitions," Hill-Top, 6 September 1903, 7; "Art Notes," Hill-Top, 4 September 1898, 2; Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Prominent Artists at the Poland Springs Art Gallery (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1898).

The 1898 art catalogue credited Frank Carlos Griffith alone with selecting and hanging the works in the exhibition. It was also the first one to request quiet in the gallery and to warn that "children must be strictly admonished not to touch the pictures or sculptures."
quality -- works created "with slight expectation of sale."
Reversing himself again in 1900, Griffith threw the doors to
the Maine State Building wide open, selecting not only oils,
but also water colors, miniatures, sculptures, and casts --
139 works in all -- rendered by seventy-three artists,
including many of the "first rank." The breadth of the show
contrasted with the narrowness of the intended audience. The
Hill-Top haughtily informed readers that the 1900 exhibition
was displayed for the advantage of "a class of people compe­
ten to appreciate and judge of its merits."

Along the way, more than a little commercialism crept
into the agenda of cultural advancement. The Hill-Top not
only frequently reminded guests of the availability of the
works on display for sale and the readiness of the librarian
to quote prices, it also aggressively promoted art as a
commodity. The combination of relatively low prices and high
potential values was the main sales pitch. The gallery did
its part to keep art "within reasonable bounds" for the
resort’s clientele by stipulating that artists price their
works at moderate levels. A bear market in art in 1897 and
1898 made for especially favorable purchasing opportunities.
The paper urged readers to buy before the tariff on imported

""Art at Poland," Hill-Top, 12 August 1900, 2-3; "The Art
Gallery," Hill-Top, 15 July 1900, 3; Annual Exhibition of
Paintings by Prominent Artists at the Poland Springs Art
Gallery (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1900); "The
Art Exhibition," Hill-Top, 1 July 1900, 3.

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works and "the full return of Prosperity" forced prices back up again."

The emphasis on the economics of art caused the Hill-Top to measure the progress of the gallery in terms of the value of the pictures exhibited. Thus, the 1900 exhibition with a total worth of $32,465 surpassed all previous efforts. The quality of the works presented conspicuous consumers with "rare opportunities" to "add much to the value and attractiveness of private collections." The abundance of paintings priced at between fifty and one hundred dollars also afforded guests the chance to "beautify the home, gratify the taste for artistic work and advance art."  

The desire to advance American art provided much of the impetus for the promotional efforts. Although Europe possessed an artistic heritage replete with "giants of the brush and palette" and set the standards for recognition in the world of art, the Hill-Top still championed the cause of native artists. They, too, could paint "good" pictures, with good defined as art that accurately represented nature and created atmosphere. "American Art," therefore, deserved "all

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70 "Art at Poland," Hill-Top, 12 August 1900, 3; "The Art Exhibition," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 11; "Pictures," Hill-Top, 26 August 1900, 10.
the encouragement possible," the paper asserted in a moment of cultural nationalism."

Relatively few guests heeded the pleas. Nor did the warning that "some one will awake to the fact that the picture they had marked as theirs has been acquired by another" arouse much response. Patrons purchased less than three percent of the 586 paintings exhibited between 1895 and 1900. One visitor who did go home with new art works was Joseph Lathrop of St. Louis. In 1897 he bought two pictures painted by Boston painter Agnes Leavitt. "Birch Tree a Century Old," a water color "full of the richness of color more commonly associated with oil," cost Lathrop $150 and "Haying on the Lower Slope of Mt. Monadnock" an additional $40."

The works of Leavitt first made their appearance in the Poland Spring gallery in 1898. A student of John Enneking among other artists, Leavitt specialized in water colors. The popularity of her paintings at the resort owed to the subject matter -- the landscape surrounding Poland Hill. Her official

\[\text{71 "The Art Exhibition," Hill-Top, 1 July 1900, 3; "Pictures," Hill-Top, 11 September 1898, 2.}\]

\[\text{72 "Art Notes," Hill-Top, 7 August 1898, 5; "Picture Sales," Hill-Top, 22 August 1897, 2; Annual Exhibition of Paintings (1898), 35; "The Art Exhibition," Hill-Top, 4 July 1897, 4; "Pictures Sold from Art Exhibitions," TMs, Poland Spring Preservation Society, Poland Spring, ME.}\]

John Enneking and Harriette Robinson also had examples of their work purchased. In 1898 H. T. Ambrose of East Orange, New Jersey bought Enneking's "November Twilight" for $100. Two years later, Freeman Wight of Boston went home with Robinson's "Northern Spies" for $60.
contribution to the 1898 exhibition was "View Across the Lower Lake, Poland." In 1900 Leavitt placed two more water colors of local scenes on display. The Hill-Top called them superb and reminded readers they "would serve as excellent souvenirs." Nettie Ricker led the way purchasing "Pine Grove in Poland" for $35."

Given the smattering of paintings sold, the Hill-Top measured the popularity of the exhibitions in other ways. In 1897 it noted "a very largely increased interest" in the gallery. Similarly, the paper reported the following season that appreciation of and inquiries about pieces in the display grew daily. Moreover, the interest had spread beyond the confines of the resort. The Hill-Top proudly proclaimed in 1898 that "the Poland Spring Exhibition has taken its place among the annual collections of art work of the country, and in the few years it has been in progress it has attained a prominence which has been most flattering."

S. S. Miles, "dean of Boston newspaper men," affirmed the self-congratulatory remarks. Following a visit to Poland Spring by "numerous art critics from Boston" on the occasion of the tenth annual exhibition, Miles declared that the group

"Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Prominent Artists at the Poland Spring Art Gallery (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1898), 35; "Art Notes," Hill-Top, 10 July 1898, 14; "The Art Exhibition," Hill-Top, 2 September 1900, 16; "Pictures Sold," unpaginated.

had unanimously approved of the display. He described the
gallery as a "Mecca" that saved the state from "total art
eclipse." "The consequent education in art cannot be other
than elevating and beneficial," he concluded. Miles praised
the Ricker brothers for bringing "the educating interest" to
the backwoods of Maine."

As far as Miles was concerned, the Rickers had succeeded
in bringing the White City to the summer city. In addition to
the gallery, the museum, library, and newspaper, each offered
patrons scaled-down versions of the leading institutions of
metropolitan culture. In the Maine State Building they could
experience the vivid contrasts of resort life. They could
admire gems of nature while calculating their value as jewels
of fashion. They could surround themselves with high-minded
government publications, literary magazines, and standard
works while they leisurely devoured light fiction. They could
learn about the operation of the resort and landmarks of the
countryside while leafing through the newspaper to read the
latest bubbles and tid-bits. They could be inspired by works
of art while envisioning how they would add to the decor of
the parlor back home. In sum, in the Maine State Building
guests of the Poland Spring resort could be comfortably,
ambiguously, and thoroughly modern.

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CONCLUSION: POLAND SPRING IN 1900

The arrival of the 1900 season brought a wave of retrospection to the Hill-Top. The first issue of the summer looked back approvingly on the old dying century, regarding its marvels and advancements as evidence of the onward and upward progress of civilization. Several issues later, the paper reviewed the "grand accomplishments" of the nineteenth century in more detail, but with a similar conclusion. Comfortable and swift trains had left stifling stages behind in the dust; while gigantic steamboats had left ancient clipper ships behind in their wake. Telegraphs encircled the globe and telephones connected moneyed representatives on Wall Street with wheat farmers in the Dakotas. Throughout the western wilderness, modern pioneers now outnumbered savages and beasts. The improvements in transportation and communication, as well as medicine, the annihilation of time, and the proliferation of luxury, all pointed to the advancements of the past century. Faith in progress still reigned supreme.¹

Although the force of progress had moved the resort increasingly toward an urban vision since 1860, vivid contrasts still lingered at Poland Spring four decades later. Consequently, pamphlets and brochures issued for the 1900

¹"Editorial," Hill-Top, 1 July 1900, 8; "Editorial," Hill-Top, 12 August 1900, 8.
season continued to highlight the extremes of antimodernity and modernity that prevailed on the hilltop. The Mansion House, for instance, retained its "colonial aspect"; yet featured "every modern convenience" — electric lights, baths, and "the most scientific and modern sanitation." The epitome of vivid contrasts, the building held the distinction of "being at one and the same time both the oldest . . . and the newest hotel in the United States."²

Extending the boundaries of the vivid contrasts, the 1900 brochure represented the Poland Spring House as "the architectural opposite of the Mansion House." Rather than projecting the image of a noble past to colonial revivalists, the main hotel exhibited the bounty of the luxurious present for the leisure class. The building contained up-to-date facilities, sumptuous furnishings, and "every comfort of the city home." In sum, perfect accommodations made the Poland Spring House a mecca of modernity for its cultured and prosperous patrons.³

A visit to the famous spring in 1900 placed guests in the middle of another landscape that combined the extremes of antimodernity and modernity. Mention of the "old-time

²Poland Spring: America's Leading Spa (So. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1900), unpaginated.

³Ibid.; Poland Spring House (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1899, 1901), 3, 6.

Since the 1899 and 1901 editions of the resort catalog are substantially the same, I have assumed that an as yet unlocated copy of the 1900 edition will be little different in content.
formation of primeval rock" through which the water flowed conjured up the pristine antiquity of the geological landscape. References to the "remnants of the primitive forest" that enshrouded the site added to the aura of natural purity. While nature instilled the water with purity, technology preserved its healing power. Thus, "a perfected bottling plant" coexisted with the spring. The operation was a model of the modern industrial landscape. Having spared no expense on the facility, the Rickers offered assurances that workers used as much care "as the modern surgeon practices in his clinical operations." Because everything was handled scientifically, everything was kept perfectly clean. Mechanical washing, sterilization, and pasteurization, combined with natural filtration, ensured that the final product reached consumers in the same condition it left the ground.4

Similar technological improvements touted in turn-of-the-century pamphlets had also modernized other elements of the Poland Spring landscape. The construction of immense barns and importation of productive herds had transformed a pastoral farmstead into a modern milk factory. The erection of an extensive greenhouse had supplanted wild natural flora with cultivated floral culture. The addition of a sprinkler system had transformed a field into the finest recreational golf links in the land and therefore, a fitting outlet for leisure culture. Finally, the rehabilitation of the Maine State

*Poland Spring House* (1899, 1901), 40.
Building had transformed a pine grove into an urbane repository of literary and artistic culture.⁵

The scope of the modernization on the hilltop impressed the promoters of the resort. In a little over a century, the Ricker family had expanded its land holdings from three hundred to two thousand acres and transformed a few farm buildings into a "magnificent assembly" of modern structures. Under the cover of the vivid contrasts between antimodernity and modernity, the country farm of 1860 had become the "summer city" of 1900.⁶

In some cases drawn by the glowing descriptions recorded in the promotional literature, several thousand visitors vacationed at the summer city in 1900. Part exclusive club, colonial homestead, social mecca, therapeutic spa, pastoral farm, natural Eden, recreational playground, and cultured city, the complex human, built, and natural environments provided patrons with ample opportunity to experience the best of both antimodernity and modernity. At the resort, they could escape the grim social realities of modern life by retreating to the nostalgic past and romantic nature, while simultaneously embracing its cultural ideals. Given the ascendance of the urban vision that increasingly shaped the resort, the antimodern appeals ultimately amounted to the gilding that defined the age. Fundamentally, the people of

⁵Ibid., 9, 12, 46.
⁶Ibid., 46.
progress came to the Poland Spring resort because it affirmed their social status, legitimated their desire for leisure, satiated their need to consume, and revitalized their faith in progress.
POSTSCRIPT

In many respects, the Gay Nineties represented the zenith of the Poland Spring resort. While it remained a vibrant and thriving summer vacation haven well into the Roaring Twenties, the forces of modernity were transforming transportation, the resort industry, the leisure class, and consequently, the summer city. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the introduction of the automobile, overexpansion, and a family succession crisis all undermined the Rickers' empire. The Great Depression, which ruined so many of the people of progress, the Rickers included, delivered the final fatal blow.

Although there is nothing inherently significant about the dawn of a new century, the year 1901 proved to be a pivotal one at Poland Spring. On July 10, 1901, Garret A. Hobart, Jr., son of the late Vice President of the United States, with his mother alongside, drove the first automobile, a five-horsepower, one-cylinder DeDion Bouton, onto the hilltop. Over the ensuing years, more and more travelers took to the road, so many, in fact, that the Rickers estimated fifty to eighty percent of all guests arrived by auto during the 1917 season. Three years later, the Hill-Top reported that "the modern tendency in resort hotel life" -- automobile

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travel -- had produced a record number of visitors who had motored to Maine.¹

The introduction of the automobile ushered in a transportation revolution as profound as the one that had followed the arrival of the railroad in Poland in 1849. The new mode of conveyance turned many summer vacationers into tourists. The mobility made possible by the auto meant families no longer were dependent upon access to rail service when planning their journeys. Nor were they obliged to spend weeks on end at the same resort. Instead, they could hop in a car and be off to some new destination. Gradually, the established patronage cultivated so assiduously by the proprietors of the great hotels became a transient clientele. Recalling the change, one member of the Ricker family commented that the new "tourist trade was a tremendous nuisance."²

The Rickers responded to the changes in the tourist industry brought about by the inroads of the auto in several ways. Most immediately, they had garages built to house guests' vehicles. Longer term solutions were promotional in

¹Frank Carlos Griffith, "Who and What Was First," Hill-Top, 26 July 1924, 4; "Good Roads and Good Road Maps," Hill-Top, 10 August 1918, 3; "Poland Spring Personals," Hill-Top, 10 July 1920, 5.

nature. Rather than resist auto travel, the Rickers actively encouraged it and aggressively endeavored to steer its enthusiasts toward the hilltop.

The Ideal Tour was one effort to recruit auto travelers to the resort. A cooperative project that united some of the leading hotel owners in the Northeast, the tour linked fifteen sites in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, including the Poland Spring resort. The plan called for the former competitors to share the patrons they had once considered as loyal clients. By collaborating to provide motorists with the three things they most desired -- a variety of scenery, maps of the best roads, and first-class accommodations -- the proprietors hoped to keep their hotel rooms full.3

The Rickers also supported the movement for improved roads. Acknowledging that "automobile touring has transformed the resort life of our day," the Hill-Top in a 1920 editorial entitled aptly enough, "The Motorist Pre-eminent," called upon the people of New England to "stop nothing short of possessing the finest roads in the world." "Good roads," the paper stated, "are the greatest of our present needs." The Hill-Top cheered on the cause with the slogan: "Better roads, better routes, better road maps."4

3 "What Is the Ideal Tour?", Hill-Top, 14 August 1920, 8; Hill-Top, 2 July 1921, 13-4.
4 "The Motorist Pre-eminent," Hill-Top, 3 July 1920, 8.
Throughout the 1920s, the "state-minded" Hiram W. Ricker strove tirelessly to make sure summer tourists kept the new and improved roads of Maine busy. Building upon the cooperative principle of the Ideal Tour, he worked to establish Maine as the Switzerland of America and the nation’s playground. The Maine Publicity Bureau, founded and presided over by Hiram in 1922, took the lead in "putting Maine before the world." Its solution to the competition from other tourist regions "in these modern days" was an advertising campaign in nineteen newspapers covering an area from Montreal, Canada, to Buffalo, New York, to Washington, DC, and having a combined circulation of three and a half million readers. As the director of the bureau, John Clark Scates, observed, "the merchant who doesn’t advertise, in some form or other, will never be successful in these modern days." Despite the consciousness that these were modern times, the members of the Maine Publicity Bureau chose a decidedly antimodern introductory slogan: "This is the portal -- the romance lies beyond."

In addition to trying to maintain healthy occupancy rates by expanding their market and improving the state’s tourism infrastructure, the Rickers aggressively expanded and improved

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their facilities during the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1906 Hiram Ricker and Sons began construction on a new, stylish, state-of-the-art Spring and Bottling House. Three years later, the family finally broke ground on the long-planned All Souls' Chapel. In 1913 the Rickers had a third hotel built on the hilltop, largely to accommodate the chauffeurs and servants who accompanied guests. In recognition of the Anglo-Saxon lineage family members had settled on as their heritage, they named the new hotel the Riccar Inn. As for the original Ricker inn, the Mansion House, a Bath Department for therapeutic water treatments was added on to the by now sprawling complex in 1914.

The Rickers also expanded their resort holdings beyond Poland Spring. In 1902 they took charge of the SamOset-by-the-Sea in Rockland giving them a presence on the Maine coast. To their hilltop and oceanside hotels, the Rickers added a third resort setting several years later when their Ricker Hotel Company became involved with the Mt. Kineo House on Moosehead Lake in Greenville, Maine. During the 1920s, the family branched out beyond Maine, too. The Rickers followed the increasing numbers of their patrons who vacationed in the South during the winter, a season that drew few travelers to Poland Spring despite the family's concerted promotional efforts. In 1926 the owners of the new Forrest Hills-Ricker

"March of Time-Table of Poland Spring," *Tower*, 3 July 1943, 7; George and Rose Ricker, ed., *Poland Spring Remembered*, 47.
Hotel in Augusta, Georgia, hired the Rickers to manage the business. For nine years, cousins George and James Ricker, sons of Alvan and Edward respectively, oversaw the Southern outpost of the family resort empire. The Rickers also played a role in the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Florida.7

Expansion was expensive. According to one family member, the Ricker brothers spent "money as fast as it came in to put up more hotels; there was no accumulation of funds." Another drain on the coffers was the leisurely life style to which many family members had become accustomed. The profligacy of the younger generation especially concerned Alvan Ricker. The relatives expecting free room and board who overran the resort presented an additional financial strain. Such extravagance during good times sowed the seeds for later hardship during hard times."

Ironically, the very son whose hardwork had rescued his father from the brink of bankruptcy eventually proved to be the prodigal son. By 1913 Edward Ricker had so overextended his personal finances that Charles Sumner Cook of the Fidelity Trust Company in Portland, Maine, wrote a four-page, single-spaced letter urging him to "make the most strenuous effort to get your outside loans cleaned up." At the time, Ricker was

7Hill-Top, 6 July 1918, 37; Hill-Top, 3 July 1926, [32]; "The Forrest Hills-Ricker Hotel," Hill-Top, 21 August 1926, 18; Mary Ricker, Interview, 2.

8Mary Ricker, Interview, 1, 5; George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 13.
personally in debt to the tune of $250,000 and was liable to Hiram Ricker and Sons for another $350,000 in loans. Cook gravely warned his client: "your creditors, by forcing you, could easily destroy all your equity.""

Edward Ricker never was destroyed, but neither did he enjoy the financial success he sought during his lifetime. When he died in 1928, his estate had a value of a little over $40,000. That was the same amount he had earned in salary and dividends in just one year back in 1913. Indicative of Ricker’s long string of poor investment decisions was a stock portfolio that included over half a million shares in eight different mining companies with a cumulative value of under $500. By comparison, his brothers invested their money much more prudently. At the time of Hiram’s death in 1930 and Alvan’s in 1933, their estates were valued at over $284,000 and $413,000 respectively.10

The deaths of the triumvirate over the span of five years precipitated a succession crisis. The eldest sons of the three brothers, who in 1895 had been proudly featured in Poland Spring Centennial as "The Future," were for the most

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Edward Payson Ricker, "Warrant and Inventory," 8 January 1929, Probate Record 16,611; Hiram Weston Ricker, "Warrant and Inventory," 13 January 1931, Probate Record 17,492; Alvan Bolster Ricker, "Warrant and Inventory," 9 January 1934, Probate Record 18,853, Androscoggin County Registry of Probate, Auburn, ME (hereafter ACRP).
part, ill suited to the task of carrying on the family business. In all, Edward, Alvan, and Hiram fathered nine children, five boys and four girls. The young men were prepared to assume their positions with Hiram Ricker and Sons by attending colleges such as Yale, Tufts, and Colby, serving in the military, and training at Poland Spring and the Forrest Hills-Ricker. The girls were expected to marry well. Alvan’s two daughters did, both wedding college professors. For other members of the future generation, however, the responsibilities and pressures of carrying on the family legacy exacted a costly toll.\textsuperscript{11}

In the estimation of her family, Marguerite Ricker, the eldest child of Hiram and Vesta, did not marry well when she wed Najeeb Mashaka, a Syrian businessman living in Boston. Her father had pegged Mashaka "a fortune hunter" and hired detectives to investigate his background. A shaken Marguerite retired to her bedroom with a case of the vapors until her father relented and assented to the union. Burdened by such strong familial distrust and scrutiny, the marriage was doomed from the outset. In 1917, less than a year after the couple wed, Marguerite committed suicide.\textsuperscript{12}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{11}Poland Spring Centennial: A Souvenir (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1895), 7; George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 11; Mary Ricker, Interview, 2.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{12}George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 16.
She was not the lone member of the future generation overwhelmed by the pressure of living up to past glory. In 1941 Edward Ricker, Jr., took his own life, too. Four years later, his brother, James, was found frozen to death in a snowbank in Portland. Both hapless cases were attributed to overdependence on alcohol.13

The personal lives of the Ricker brothers were not without their own troubles. After coming to the aid of Eleanor Burke, a sixteen-year-old orphan from Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1922, Edward Ricker found himself accused of violating the Mann Act, legislation aimed at prohibiting interstate traffic in prostitution. Burke had left her fiancé, Frederick Jenner. Through the intercession of an aunt who had once worked for the Rickers, the young woman was hired as a waitress and escorted to Poland Spring by Edward Ricker. The jilted Jenner exacted his revenge by filing a complaint with the local police.14

As for younger brother Alvan Ricker, he raised eyebrows among family members when in 1925 at the age of nearly seventy-five, he eloped with Jane Jeffries, an English woman thirty years his junior. She had come to Poland Spring at the invitation of Edward Ricker several years earlier to serve as a nurse at the Bath Department. After Alvan's wife, the much-

13Mary Ricker, Interview, 5.
loved Cora, died in 1922, Jeffries attended to his physical maladies. Alvan's two daughters, Janette and Marion, resented the attention their father lavished on the nurse, believing he had never paid as much attention to their mother. The generous dowry Alvan bestowed upon his new bride did nothing to bridge the generational rift.\footnote{George and Rose Ricker, ed., \textit{Poland Spring Remembered}, 11-2; Mary E. Bennett, ed., \textit{Poland: Past and Present}, 1795-1970 ([Poland, ME]: Poland Anniversary Committee, 1970), 92-3.}

Despite the problems behind the scenes, the pages of the \textit{Hill-Top} neither hinted at trouble in paradise nor foretold crises to come. To the contrary, the 1920s were by all accounts the best of times. It was during this decade after all that the paper dubbed the resort "a city of vivid contrasts" where guests could experience "varied life -- ultra-modern and American."\footnote{"Many Vivid Contrasts," \textit{Hill-Top}, 29 July 1922, 3.}

One "phase" of the variety included the Shaker Sisters who continued to come to the Poland Spring House to sell their fancy goods. Their "quaint, old-fashioned gowns" contrasted with "the revealing styles" of the "animated, modern throng." Another phase was the group of fashionable young women who appeared among the throng. They rode their horses over "lovely wooded lanes" that shared the same the same pastoral "English touch" as "the parks and suburbs of great cities." A third phase of contrasts was the encampment of Indians.
They, like the Shakers, offered patrons "quaintly attractive things" to purchase. Although the natives had adopted the language, customs, and other "advantages of modern civilization," they still represented "the spirit, the characteristics, even the athletic supremacy of tribal ancestors." Such contrasts between modernity and antimodernity, which the paper considered limitless, made Poland Spring "a wonercity." 17

When decades of modern progress came crashing down in October of 1929, the Rickers were caught in the avalanche. In a day, many members of the leisure class were stripped of the source of much of their status. The Great Depression that followed the stock market crash hardly made vacationing possible, let alone appropriate, for many of the resort's former patrons. Under the circumstances, Poland Spring became more of "a tourist operation" sustained by "one week stays." 18

To keep the resort afloat, the Rickers were forced to take out a $300,000 mortgage on 1240 acres from Fidelity Trust Company in 1931. Thanks to the loan, the future generation hung on in the hotel business for a few years after the passing of the Ricker brothers, but times were tough. The intercession of Manufacturers National Bank of Lewiston "for the purpose of meeting and correcting present financial difficulties" rescued Hiram Ricker and Sons in 1936. The end

17 Ibid.
18 Mary Ricker, Interview, 5.
finally came four years later. In 1940 the Rickers transferred ownership of the long-time family home to Charles Lane and Dan Needham of National Fireworks Company in Hanover, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{19}

The sale did not end the presence of the Rickers on the hilltop. The deal stipulated that the new proprietors had to allow Sarah and Nettie Ricker lifetime residence at their birthplace. The fall from power often made it an uncomfortable stay for the two spinsters, especially for the status-conscious Nettie, but both women called Poland Spring home until their deaths. Nettie went first in 1944. Sarah nearly a decade later in 1953. Both sisters joined their parents and siblings at the family's final resting place, a cemetery not far from the site where Wentworth Ricker had built the Mansion House.\textsuperscript{20}

Today, Poland Spring is run as an economy resort that bears as little resemblance to the luxury resort of the Gilded Age as the summer city of 1900 bore to the country farm of

\textsuperscript{19}Deed, Book 412, 100-22, Androscoggin County Registry of Deeds, Auburn, ME; Petition, Alvan B. Ricker, Probate Record 18,853, 16 May 1936, ACRP; [Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.], "Poland Spring House," [c. 1970], TMs, photocopy, 4, MHPC; George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 22.

Tracking the changes in resort's ownership is difficult because the deed transactions continued to be recorded in the name of Hiram Ricker and Sons without specifying who was actually in charge of the corporation.

\textsuperscript{20}George and Rose Ricker, ed., Poland Spring Remembered, 22.
1860. In place of the Poland Spring House, which burned down in a spectacular blaze on July 3 and 4, 1975, stands the smaller and simpler Maine Inn. The nondescript Motor Inn substitutes for the once noble Mansion House which suffered the same fate as the large hotel in the fall of 1976. The only remaining hotel from the Ricker's long reign on the hilltop is the former Riccar Inn. The resort's current owners, Mel and Cyndi Robbins, have refashioned it the Presidential Inn, complete with the fanciful mythology that from John Adams to John Kennedy "every president of the United States had stayed or visited at Poland Spring." 21

Equally adept at refashioning the past, the new owners of the spring celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the water business in 1995. What was once the quintessential family-run enterprise is now the quintessential division of a multinational corporation. Poland Spring Corporation is just one holding of Great Waters of America, an entity owned by the Perrier Group of America which is a subsidiary of the renowned French spring water company. The old Spring House and Bottling Plant still stand, but are falling down, overgrown, and fenced off. The water, which has enjoyed renewed popularity among a new breed of health and status-conscious enthusiasts since the early 1980s, is now shipped near and far.

from a modern "state-of-the-art" bottling plant at the foot of Ricker Hill.22

The pastoral landscape has almost completely vanished as the development value of land in New England long ago surpassed its agricultural value. The Cow Barn is gone. So, too, are the farm buildings on Shaker Hill and almost all of the dairy farms in Poland. Fields, pastures, gardens, and orchards have largely either been replaced by houses or reclaimed by trees. Nevertheless, the proprietors of the Inns at Poland Spring, like the Rickers before them, pride themselves on the freshness of their food and claim to be supplied by local "small farms, dairies, poultry raisers and fishermen."23

The golf course remains the focus of the recreational landscape, although it has been supplemented by the addition of a swimming pool and shuffle board court. Offering eighteen holes since 1915, the course celebrated its centennial in 1993, three years prematurely, but in keeping with the well-established tradition of movable celebrations and malleable history at Poland Spring. The current Pro Shop is the former Pavilion, which during the early twentieth century served as a dance hall and movie theater at the resort. The building


23Robbins, Poland Spring, 30.
was moved to the spot where the Poland Spring House stood and then jacked up to provide golfers with the same view a seat in the dining room once presented resort patrons.\textsuperscript{24}

The natural landscape remains largely unchanged. When the winds blow from the northwest and clear away the smog-laden summer haze, the Oxford Hills and White Mountains can still be plainly seen. Although now ringed by camps, the Range Ponds remain essentially unchanged, too. What has changed is the emphasis, or lack thereof, on nature. Fresh air and shady trees apparently are enough of a natural allure now. Gone are the manmade embellishments such as the greenhouses and paths guests had once expected. The firm formerly described as all powerful has lost half its partnership and nature is now left to do almost all the work alone.

Two buildings have been set aside to preserve the history of the hilltop, the Maine State Building and All Souls' Chapel. The former serves as a museum displaying scores of memorabilia that document the rich history of the resort and the Ricker family that built it. The latter is a popular spot for weddings. Both buildings are cared for by the Poland Spring Preservation Society, whose president is George Ricker, the grandson of Alvan Bolster Ricker, great grandson of Hiram and Janette Ricker, and direct descendant of Jabez and Mary Ricker, who came to Poland Spring over two centuries ago, and

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{The Inns at Poland Spring} (Poland Spring, ME: n. p., [1993]), 12-3; George and Rose Ricker, ed., \textit{Poland Spring Remembered}, 45.
of Maturin Riccar, who came to New England over a century earlier. The architectural, natural, and human elements found at the present-day Poland Spring resort constitute the ongoing and ever-evolving legacy of the people of progress.
APPENDICES

Appendix A

RICKER-BOLSTER GENEALOGY

Maturin Ricker (1669-1706) Isaac Bolster (1670-1753)
m. Rebecca Shaw m. Hepsibah (1660-1742)

Joseph Ricker (1695-1771) Isaac Bolster (1737-1825)
m. Elizabeth Garland m. Mary Dwinall (1739-1815)

Jabez Ricker (1742-1827) Isaac Bolster, Jr. (1769-1835)
m. Molly Wentworth (1743-1838) m. Hannah Cushman (1777-1865)

Wentworth Ricker (1768-1837) Alvan Bolster (1795-1862)
m. Mary Pottle (1764-1843) m. Cynthia Wheeler (1802-1879)

Mary Ricker Janette Wheeler Bolster
Wentworth, Jr. William Wheeler
Sophronia m. Eleazer Burbank John Quincy Adams
Hiram Martha m. John Pulsifer
Janet
Albert m. Charlotte Schillinger Mary Josephine
Hiram Maria m. Ira Nay
Sarah m. John Stockbridge
Alvan Augustine

Hiram Ricker (1809-1893)
m. Janette Wheeler Bolster (1821-1883)

Edward Payson Ricker (1847-1928)
m. Amelia A. Glancy (1860-1935)

Edward Payson Ricker, Jr. (1893-1941)
James Wesley (1895-1944)

Alvan Bolster (1850-1933)
m. Cora B. Sanders (1860-1922)
Jane Jeffries (1880-1960)

Janette Bolster Ricker (1887-1978)
George Alvan (1890-1966)
Marion Louise (1894-1966)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>(1877-1969)</td>
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<td>Hiram Weston Ricker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janette Maria</td>
<td>(1865-1944)</td>
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Appendix B

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

1793  Jabez Ricker of Alfred, Maine, and Eliphaz Ring of Poland, Maine, exchange property.


10/17/1851  Hiram and Mary Ricker mortgage farm to Solomon H. Chandler for $2500. [Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, book 233, page 455; ACRD 16: 69]

06/13/1856  Eleazer Burbank, husband of Hiram and Mary's sister, Sophronia Ricker, is high bidder at $358.18 for "right in equity of [mortgage] redemption" on farm. [ACRD 6: 148-150]

10/20/1856  Solomon Chandler forecloses on Hiram and Mary Ricker. [Cumberland County Registry of Deeds, book 233, page 455; ACRD 4: 61]

01/12/1860  Solomon H. and Andrew C. Chandler, heirs of Solomon Chandler, convey farm to Nathaniel J. Miller for $5200. [ACRD 25: 67]

Nathaniel Miller conveys farm to Solomon and Andrew Chandler for $3000. (discharged 1878) [ACRD 22: 442]

1867  Hiram Ricker buys out Miller. ["Poland Spring, the Paradise of New England," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 6 (hereafter LSJ)]

10/12/1870  Hiram Ricker conveys right of redemption for farm to John R. Pulsifer, husband of Janette Ricker's sister, Martha V. Bolster, and Edward A. Little for $400. [ACRD 58: 405]

Janette Ricker conveys right of dower to John Pulsifer and Edward Little for $400. ["Quit-claim Deed," ACRD, Private Collection]
09/16/1873  Ricker farm valued at $6500 is assigned to Mary Ellen, Sarah W., and Marcia W. Miller.  [ACRD 79: 60-9]

C. 1873  Judgement against Miller heirs goes in favor of the Rickers.  [LSJ]

01/22/1874  Solomon and Andrew Chandler convey 1851 mortgage to Mary, Sarah, and Marcia Miller for $1.  [ACRD 51: 323]

07/10/1875  John Pulisfer and Edward Ricker mortgage farm to Mechanic Savings Bank for $5500 payable in four years with semi-annual interest at 7.5%.  (discharged 1876)  [ACRD 69: 453]

07/10/1875  John Pulisfer conveys farm to Edward P. Ricker for $500.  [ACRD 74: 534]

Edward Ricker conveys farm to John Pulisfer for $5500.  (discharged 1876)  [ACRD 81: 75]

01/20/1876  Edward and Alvan Ricker lease half of hotel lot to Albert Young for half of hotel construction costs.  He will become half owner of the hotel if not bought out after six years.  [ACRD 84: 65-6; 90: 195-7; 95: 534-5]

03/07/1876  Edward Ricker conveys half of hotel lot and a quarter of farm to Alvan Bolster Ricker for $2000.  (amended in 1882)  [ACRD 83: 112]

05/02/1876  Edward and Alvan Ricker mortgage farm to Union Mutual Life Insurance Co. for $12,000 repayable in five years with semi-annual interest at 8%.  {refinances 1875 mortgages}  (discharged 1878)  [ACRD 84: 65-7]

John Pulisfer discharges 1875 mortgage.  [ACRD 81:75]

05/06/1876  Mechanic Savings Bank discharges 1875 mortgage.  [ACRD 69: 453]

11/09/1878  Edward and Alvan Ricker mortgage farm to Union Mutual for $11,000, the principal repayable semi-annually at $1000 over six years plus semi-annual interest.  {refinances 1876 mortgage}  (discharged 1884)  [ACRD 95: 354-6]
11/14/1878  Solomon and Andrew Chandler discharge 1860 mortgage originally held by Nathaniel Miller. [ACRD 95: 367]

11/20/1878  Union Mutual discharges 1876 mortgage. [ACRD 95: 367]

03/31/1879  Edward and Alvan Ricker mortgage farm to Philander S. Briggs for $6000 repayable over five years. (second mortgage—total indebtedness $17,000) (discharged 1890) [ACRD 98: 13-5]

11/20/1880  Oliver Marsh writes of "trouble" within the family over the property. [Correspondence, AHS]

03/18/1881  Edward and Alvan Ricker mortgage farm to P. S. Briggs for $15,000 repayable in six years. (third mortgage—indebtedness $32,000) (transferred 1891) [ACRD 104:120-1]

04/26/1881  Charles R. Milliken and Henry W. Staples assess value of Albert Young's interest in Poland Spring House (PSH) and hotel lot at $23,972.39. [Correspondence, AHS]

01/15/1883  Edward conveys to Hiram Weston Ricker a quarter of Ricker farm for $1. Hiram assumes responsibility for a quarter of the family's debts and expenses. [ACRD 111: 284-5]

03/28/1884  P. S. Briggs conveys hotel lot to Edward and Alvan Ricker for $5000. [ACRD 114: 153]

03/31/1884  Edward and Alvan Ricker convey PSH and hotel lot to Henry A. Hildreth and Charles A. Morss for $25,000 repayable in gold over five years plus $2000 interest. (refinances first mortgage—indebtedness $46,000) (discharged 1892) [ACRD 110: 553]

Union Mutual discharges 1878 mortgage. [ACRD 114: 173]

04/13/1885  Edward and Alvan Ricker convey PSH and hotel lot to Hildreth for $5000. (hotel lot—second mortgage—indebtedness—$51,000) (discharged 1892) [ACRD 116: 354]
02/11/1889 Edward and Alvan Ricker convey PSH and hotel lot to Charles Morss for $25,000 repayable in five annual installments of $5000 paid in gold plus 6% interest due semi-annually. (hotel lot-third mortgage-indebtedness-$76,000) (discharged 1892) [ACRD 133: 311-3]

04/12/1889 Marion E. Hildreth, executrix, conveys 1885 mortgage of Henry Hildreth to Marion Hildreth, trustee, in consideration of $5000 paid to Alma E. Hildreth. [ACRD 130: 86-7]

07/10/1890 Oliver L. and Alonzo H. Briggs, the latter manager of the Boston Poland Water depot in 1877, discharge 1879 mortgage. (indebtedness-$70,000) [ACRD 145: 412-3]

12/12/1891 Oliver L. and Alonzo H. Briggs, executors for P. S. Briggs, transfer 1881 mortgage to Melissa E. Downer for $15,000. (transferred 1892) [ACRD 130: 341]

02/01/1892 Edward, Alvan, and Hiram Ricker owe Melissa Downer interest at 5% due semi-annually with principal due in five years. [ACRD 145: 414-5]

03/04/1892 Charles Morss conveys half 1884 mortgage to Nelson Bartlett for $12,818.75. (discharged 1892) [ACRD 130: 359-60]

Morss conveys 1889 mortgage to Bartlett for $15,055. (discharged 1892) [ACRD 130: 359]

03/07/1892 Edward and Alvan Ricker mortgage hotel lot and buildings to Marion E. Hildreth for $20,000 payable in five years at 5% interest due semi-annually in gold. (discharged 1897) [ACRD 145: 501-3]

Edward and Alvan Ricker mortgage hotel lot and buildings to Nelson Bartlett for $25,000. (consolidated 1898) [ACRD 145: 499-501]

03/09/1892 Marion Hildreth discharges 1884 and 1885 mortgages. Nelson Bartlett discharges 1884 and 1889 mortgages. (indebtedness-$60,000) [ACRD 145: 513-7]

05/10/1892 Melissa Downer transfers 1881 mortgage to Nelson Bartlett for $15,000. (consolidated 1898) [ACRD 159:546-7]
Edward, Alvan, and Hiram Ricker convey property holdings to Hiram Ricker and Sons for $1. [ACRD 160: 461-82]

Maria Hildreth discharges 1892 mortgage for $20,000. {indebtedness-$40,000} [ACRD 159: 547-8]

Hiram Ricker and Sons conveys Ricker farm to Nelson Bartlett for $65,000 payable in five years at 5% interest. (discharged 1911) {consolidates all outstanding mortgages} [ACRD 178: 286-90]

United Society of Believers conveys Poland Hill property to Hiram Ricker and Sons for $7500. Hiram Ricker and Sons conveys Poland Hill to Shakers for $7500. The deed will be voided if the Rickers repay $7500 at 6% over ten years. (discharged 1915) [ACRD 183: 144-9]
Appendix C-Table 1

ORIGINS OF POLAND SPRING GUESTS BY STATE

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Sources: Hill-Top, 1894, 1901.

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**Appendix C-Table 2**

**LEADING POINTS OF ORIGIN FOR GUESTS**

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949 65.4

**Appendix C-Table 3**

**ORIGINS OF GUESTS BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY**

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Appendix D

ESTATES OF RICKER BROTHERS

Edward Payson Ricker—died December 22, 1928

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<td>Ricker Hotel Company stock</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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Hiram Weston Ricker—died November 19, 1930

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<td>Real Estate</td>
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<td>Goods, Chattel, and Cash</td>
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<td>Bank Account</td>
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<td>stock</td>
<td>$125,541</td>
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### Alvan Bolster Ricker—died December 5, 1933

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<tr>
<td>1192 shares @ $50</td>
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<td>92 $1000 bonds @ $900</td>
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<tr>
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Appendix E-Table 1

PRODUCTION OF POLAND SPRING WATER

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<th>Barrels</th>
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<th>Gallons</th>
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<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>7,000</td>
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<td>1884</td>
<td>9,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>5,970</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>6,849</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
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<td>500,000</td>
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1 barrel = 46 gallons in 1884; 40 gallons in 1890

Sources: "Poland Mineral Spring," Lewiston Evening Journal, 10 June 1876; [Hiram Ricker], "Poland Spring," [1884], TMs, 19, 41, Androscoggin Historical Society, Auburn, ME; Poland Spring Hotels (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1887), unpaginated; Poland Spring Hotels (1888), 9; Poland Spring Water: Nature's Great Remedy and Its Marvelous Curative Properties (So. Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1890), unpaginated; Georgia Drew Merrill, ed., History of Androscoggin County, Maine (Boston: W. A. Ferguson, 1891), 736; "Poland Spring, the Paradise of New England," Lewiston Saturday Journal, 6 August 1892, 8; Poland Spring Centennial, 47; "Poland Water," Hill-Top, 8 September 1895, 1; Mitchell and Davis, comp., The Town Register: Poland, Raymond and Casco, 1906 (Brunswick, ME: H. E. Mitchell, 1906), 24.
Appendix E-Table 2

AGENTS FOR POLAND SPRING WATER

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<td>T. B. Barker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob Beetem</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. A. Hart</td>
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R. T. Whiting, Bridgeport, CT
P. Williams, Taunton, MA
E. N. Yerxa, Buffalo, NY

Sources: *Poland Mineral Spring Water* (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, [1879]), inside front cover; *Poland Mineral Spring Water: The Story of Its History and Its Marvellous Curative Properties* (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, 1883, 1888, 1889, 1891, 1893, 1895), inside front cover.
### Appendix F-Table 1

**LIBRARY CIRCULATION**

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### Appendix F-Table 2

**CLASSIFICATION OF VOLUMES AT CLOSE OF SEASONS**

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Appendix G

ADVERTISERS IN HILL-TOp

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Sources: *Hill-Top*, 1894-1900.

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Appendix H

EXHIBITORS AT POLAND SPRING ART GALLERY

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Hawkins, C. W. 1895 1896 (L. W.)
Hayden, Charles H. 1896 1897
Hazard, Arthur M. 1900
Henwood, Frederick D. 1896 1897
Henwood, Grace 1896
Hodgson, S. P. 1895
Holden, Mabel H. 1898
Hooper, Grace 1900
Ipsen, Ernest L. 1897 1898
Johnson, Marshall 1899 1900
Jones, Pauline Sawtelle 1900
Kay 1895 1896
Kirkpatrick, Mrs. A. B. 1898
Klumpke, Anna E. 1898
Knowlton, Helen M. 1896 1897
Kronberg 1900
Lamb, Florence F. 1898
Lansil, Walter F. 1896 1898 1899 1900
Lansil, Wilbur H. 1896 1898 1899 1900
Leavitt, Agnes 1897 1898 1900
Leighton, Scott 1895 1898 1899 1900
Lothrop, Susan 1900
Major, E. L. 1900
Matthews, Nanna B. 1898
Mead, J. 1898
Mielziener, Leo 1896
Monks, J. A. S. 1897 1898 1899 1900
Montague, Fannie S. 1896 1900
Newman, Benjamin T. 1896 1900
Nichols, Burr H. 1896
Noyes, George L. 1897 1900
Palmer, Adelaide 1895 1896 1897 1898 1899 1900
Paneiri, Ruggero 1900
Parker, Charles S. 1900
Paxton, William H. (M.-1900) 1896 1900
Pierce, Charles F. 1900
Platt, Martha A. 1897 1898 1900
Pope, Alexander 1898 1899 1900
Prescott, Mrs. Katherine T. 1898 1899 1900
Pulsifer, L. A. 1895 1897 1898 1900
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Richards, William Trost 1898
Richardson, Mrs. Mary N. 1900
Ricker, Jenette Bolster 1895 1896 1897
Ricker, Nettie M. 1895 1896 1897
Robinson, Harriette Wood 1897 1898 1899 1900
Ryder, Henry Orne 1897 1898
Sanderson, Charles W.  1897 1898 1900
Sandham, Henry  1897 1900
Savary, Caroline A.  1897
Schenk, August Frederick Albrecht/1896
Senior, H. I.  1898
Sewell, Mrs. M. M.  1898
Shannon, Martha A. S.  1897 1898 1900
Shapleigh, Frank Henry  1895 1896 1897 1898 1899 1900
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Spaulding, Henry P.  1898
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Stone, William  1897
Straus, M.  1900
Stuart, J. E.  1897
Tarbell, Edmund C.  1896 1900
Taylor, Elizabeth V.  1896 1898 1899 1900
Thompson, Nellie E.  1896
Thresher, William  1898
Tompkins, F. H.  1896
Townsend, Frances B.  1897 1898 1899 1900
Triscott, S. P. Rolt  1896 1898 1900
Turner, Ross  1897 1898
Wagner, Jacob  1896 1897
Wait, Lizzie F.  1898 1899 1900
Waldo, George Burnette  1897
Walker, Charles A.  1897 1900
Waltman, H. F.  1895
Waterman, Marcus  1897 1899 1900
Wentworth, Catherine Denkman  1900
Whiteman, S. Edwin  1898
Whitmore, William R.  1900
Whittaker, Ethel  1900
Whittemore, William J.  1900
Wilcox, James A. J.  1898 1900

Sources: Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Prominent Artists at the Poland Springs Art Gallery (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker and Sons, 1896-1900); Hill-Top, 1895-1900.

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ACRP: Androscoggin County Registry of Probate, County Building, Auburn, Maine.
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DW: DeWolfe and Wood, Alfred, Maine.
MHPC: Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.
MHS: Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.
MSL: Maine State Library, Augusta, Maine.
PSPS: Poland Spring Preservation Society, Poland Spring, Maine.
USS: Shaker Library, United Society of Shakers, New Gloucester, Maine.

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