

Abial Chandler, Jr.

Waterspout Mountain House Alpine House Civil War Veteran News Correspondent

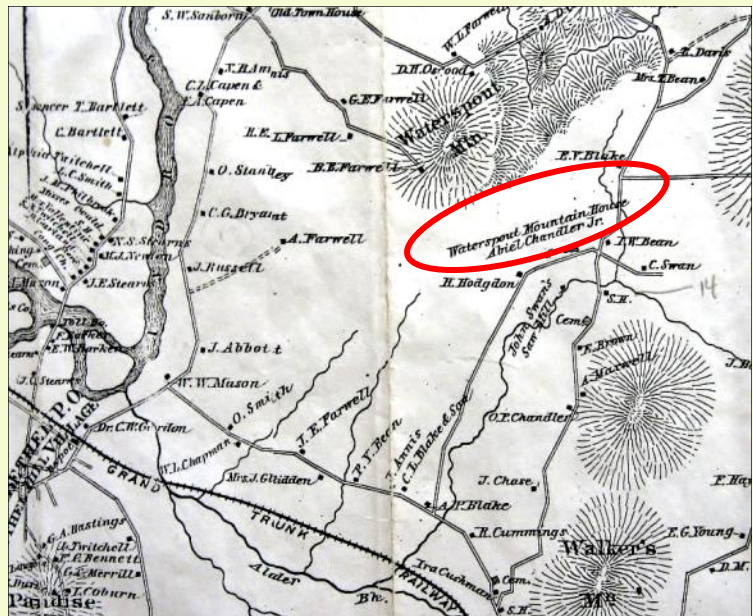
Abial Chandler (1837-1898) was born in the Chandler neighborhood of Bethel. His parents were Abiel and Hannah Bartlett Chandler; Abiel was known as a thrifty and prosperous farmer. According to the 1858 map of Bethel the road to the "Chandler neighborhood" began in the Walker's Mill area at the school. Bethel's 1880 map shows the Chandler farm, by that date known as the Waterspout Mountain (Farm) House, lying beside what is in 2013 called the Chandler Hill Road. (See the accompanying 1880 map)

Abial Chandler probably attended the district school in the Chandler neighborhood; a school is shown on the 1858 map on the road to Walkers Mills and near the Chandler Hill Cemetery. He attended Gould Academy until completion of the 1857 second term. Chandler seemed quite proud of his Gould years writing about it in the Bethel column of the March 14, 1893 edition of the Oxford County Democrat. Among the 45 students attending at the same time he noted that 15 were girls and names of some of the other students included Enoch Foster, Jr., Clark S. Edwards, Augustus M. Carter, and Harlan Brown, who was killed at Antietam and for whom the Brown Post G.A.R. was named. He also listed Samuel B. Locke Jr., owner of the Locke mills who resides in West Paris as a class member in 1857.

During the Civil War Chandler served three years, in the 4th Maine Battery, Light Artillery. Went in as a private; came home as quartermaster ser-



Waterspout Mountain House was typical of summer vacation places for boarders coming to the country to escape city heat. Bethel Historical Soc. photo



1880 map of Bethel area showing location of Chandler's Waterspout Mountain House. Click map for enlargement

geant, Ambulance Corps, Artillery Brigade, 6th Corps. He wrote in 1857 that he was near Harlan Brown when he fell and helped bury him.

Abial Chandler married Ellen M. Blake, daughter of David and Olive Adams Blake. Ellen Blake's grandfather, Benjamin Blake, had purchased the Blake Mills on the Alder River from his father. The Blake Mills were later known as the Walker's Mill and still later as the Virgin Mills.

Eva Bean wrote in the East Bethel Road that after the Civil War Abial Chandler, Jr., ran the Waterspout Mountain House for summer boarders. The 1880 map of the Bethel area prominently shows the Waterspout Mountain House location on the road now named Chandler Hill Road (see 1880 map).

Probably during 1895 Abial Chandler bought land in the area then known as Mason Park in Bethel village and began construction of what became his Alpine House.

In the May 4, 1886 Democrat Chandler announced that the Waterspout Mountain Farm, an excellent stock farm, is offered for sale – a good bargain for someone.

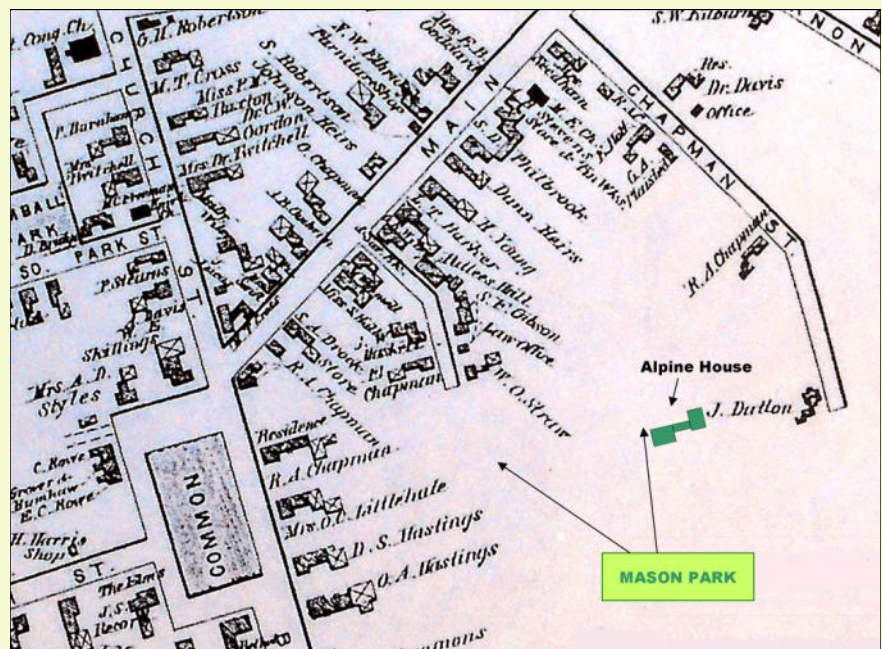
Then in November 1886 the news reported Abiel Chandler has sold a part of the Waterspout Mountain Farm to Ira Bean who will run the house for summer boarders while Chandler will look after his Alpine House in Mason Park.

The same month a news item reported that Abial Chandler has purchased of S.F. Gibson 14 square rods of land in front of W.D. Straw's house for a passage way to his lot beyond; \$100.

Eva Bean wrote that the (Chandler farm) house burned down in the 1880's and the Chandlers moved away. I did not find any news items about the fire during the remainder of the 1880's. The fire may have occurred and the Bean's rebuilt the house. Eva Bean also wrote that today (1959) Mabel Bean Robertson, widow of Frank O. Robertson, occupied the house.

June 24, 1887. Abial Chandler Jr. ... every room in his large house (Alpine House) is engaged for summer boarders.

1880's Bethel Village map—Alpine House 1886 within Mason Park—Mason Street not voted until 1889.



At the same time, Chandler also reported that two large houses, Messrs Farwell and Benson, are already built on land he sold them on Mason Park and others are negotiating for building lots. "This enterprise of Chandlers, of building up this part of Bethel is certainly a good thing for the village."

June 1889: **Bethel:** Your correspondent, Abial Chandler, has a pension of \$30 a month and seventeen hundred dollars back pay. W.E. and J.P. Skillings are driven with orders at their spool mill. *Business is booming around Bethel depot.*

August 28, 1888: Mrs. Abiel Chandler opens her (Alpine) house to school boarders at \$2.50 a week.

November 2, 1889 The street laid out a few weeks ago connecting Chapman and Broad Streets has been named Mason Street. Many think that it should have been named Chandler Street on account of the untiring efforts of Abial Chandler, Jr., to obtain its location.

July 1892, A summary of boarding houses follows: S.B. Twitchell accommodates: 20 guests; Mrs. A.W. Valentine: 25; Deacon E.C. Chamberlain: 16; the Locke's in North Bethel: 40; E.P. Grover in West Bethel: 30; **The Alpine House, Bethel Hill: A. Chandler, 20.**

In 1893 - Abiel Chandler, Jr.: Correspondent for both the Oxford Democrat and Advertiser.

During 1894 and early 1895 Chandler busied himself with news reporting, traveling to Locke Mills, West Bethel and Gilead. Apparently during 1895 he began experiencing confusion and disorientation, possibly feeling his work had overcome him.

August 21 1895, Abial Chandler went to the Insane Asylum at Augusta last week on his own volition to be treated for aberration of the mind. Mr. J. C. Billings, a Bethel selectman, accompanied him. (Later) Letter from Abial Chandler says that he is perfectly happy at the Insane Asylum in Augusta and in fact prefers it to Bethel.

For the Chandlers, 1896 was not a good year. October news reported that The Alpine House has been shut up one

ALPINE HOUSE 2013



Alpine House—Bethel Historical Society photo from the Society's self guided walking tour of Bethel Village

Since 1997 Thomas and Rebecca Zicarelli have owned the former Alpine House. Ernest Perkins compiled a history of Mason Street buildings for the BHS Courier in 1983. The Chandlers had no children. Eliphalet Blake, Mrs. Chandler's brother, acquired the property and he sold it to Fannie Bisbee Lovejoy in 1905. About 1915 Mrs. Lovejoy sold the property to Clarence Fox, owner until his death in 1933. Bethel Savings Bank acquired the property from the Fox estate and sold it to Fred Gorman in 1938. Gardiner Gorman inherited the property in 1947 and owned it until his death in 1992.

year on account of Mrs. Ellen M. Chandler, the landlady, being ill and unable to run it. William Glidden, a young man, has been engaged to take charge of the house as superintendent.

Abiel Chandler suffered a paralytic shock in the summer where he lost use of one arm and leg went to Boston for treatment.

During the summer J. G. Rich seems to have taken over most of Chandler's reporting duties. Rich wrote this about the correspondent: Abiel Chandler, Jr., has a Sharpe's rifle which he captured from the rebels at Harper's Ferry in the fall of 1861. The barrel of the rifle is very long and thick and therefore is very heavy. It is a fine shooter and will throw a ball seventy-five rods (412 yards) accurately when a telescope is attached.

November 1896: Abiel Chandler, Jr., left by train for Augusta to spend the winter there.

Two months later in January 1897 news said Abial Chandler, Jr., is not so well. He is at the Insane Asylum Augusta and will remain there until mid March.

Abial Chandler Jr. died Jan 8, 1898, Age 61. Ellen M Blake Chandler, wife of Abiel Chandler, died Aug 27, 1911, aged 67. The Chandlers were buried in Riverside Cemetery in the same lot with Abial's parents and Ellen Chandler's younger sister, Lillian Blake.



The Chandler family monument at Riverside Cemetery.

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Sources: Oxford County Democrat and Oxford County Advertiser newspapers (for the period 1886 to 1897); William Lapham *History of Bethel Maine*; Eva Bean, *East Bethel Road* and Randall Bennett, *Bethel Maine An Illustrated History*. 1880 map sections are photos of maps in the collections of the Bethel Historical Society.

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