



Herbert Waters. New Hampshire Artist Archives Collection.

Herbert Waters: 1933-1941

From 1933 on, except for a brief period of war service in a Providence, RI shipyard, Herbert Waters and his wife Bertha made their home in the Granite State. From 1935 through 1941, he worked as a WPA artist for New Hampshire's Federal Art Project.

In 1982, reviewing prints in the State Library Collection for the first time since he had turned the blocks over to the federal government 40 years earlier, he recalled his WPA years: "I worked much of the time as an art teacher of adult classes and as a woodworking artist. During those years we lived in 3 different houses in the town of Warner...First, in a cottage near the covered bridge at Waterloo...Then in a house in Warner North Village-up the hill from the Mink Hills from Warner proper. Finally in the "Emily Clark" house by the town ice pond. Many of (the subjects in) these prints were in walking distance of our houses."

"I taught classes in Bradford...and in Concord. We produced a certain quota of art work by the month...In my case, I did watercolors and linoleum blocks. My paintings were not very good, and I found by hard experience that I could do an "acceptable" print quite fast and fairly easily...I stopped trying to paint and concentrated on linoleum and soon wood cuts and then wood engravings."

Waters recorded comments on each of the prints in the State Library's collection, noting that some were much better than others. He saw the WPA years as a great opportunity to experiment with different techniques and styles, letting him find and perfect his affinity with the medium of wood engraving.

With the perspective of time and experience, he felt that the linoleum cut, *Sawdust Pile and Saw Mill in Warner, NH*, was still "a good, interesting print." On the other hand, he thought the print, *Church, Graveyard, and Horse*, showed signs of very painful efforts to learn the demanding medium of wood engraving. He commented, "Not very good!"

He recorded his reasons for persisting, "Wood engraving as a medium (has) richer possibilities and (is) more fulfilling for me in what I want to express in prints. I wanted to define precise shapes more completely, express what seemed to me their exact essence and meaning—this is what wood engraving offers the artist."