

From
Wolfeboro
Public
Library

The enclosed information was obtained from the following sources:

THE HISTORY OF WOLFEBORO, NH 1770-1994

Volume I

A Chronological History of the Town and its People

Wolfeboro Historical Society

By: Q. David Bowers

1996

THE HISTORY OF WOLFEBORO, NH 1770-1994

Volume II

Wolfeboro, NH. Places and People

Wolfeboro Historical Society

By: Q. David Bowers

1996

The New Hampshire Commentary

Blog of Dean Dexter

November 6, 2003 and updated, November 3, 2006

**I have also been informed that a Mr. Gene Denu,
(Treasurer/Archivist) who works for the Wolfeboro Historical
Society is very helpful with requests that people have of this
nature.**

His e-mail address is: mickgene85@gmail.com

Address: Wolfeboro Historical Society

PO Box 1066

233 South Main Street

Wolfeboro, NH 03894

Phone number: 603-569-4997

General inquiries, in case you cannot reach Mr. Denu is:

wolfeborohistoricalsociety@gmail.com

pg 327 VOIT

Mme. Chiang Kai-Shek and Debra Paget: In the 1950s the Hopewell summer estate on Wolfeboro Neck was sold to the Chinese legation. From the 1950s through the 1970s Col. Lin Chi Kung and his wife, American movie star Debra Paget, spent time there. Mme. Kai-Shek, wife of the leader of Nationalist China and father of Col. Kung, is believed to have visited once or twice.²³ Local stories and legends concerning the place abounded, but hard facts were scarce.

Dr. Lawrence S. Toms, former Wolfeboro selectman, commented in April 1995 after reading the preceding and other commentaries:²⁴ "I believe the Kung-Paget-Chiang Kai-Shek part of the Wolfeboro history is somewhat downplayed. I have had many talks over the years with 'Red' Berry who was the caretaker of the estate at various times. He told of soldiers guarding the roads with rifles, gate posts with soldiers, boats arriving at night, and in later years helicopters in the dark."

VOIT
436

1979, June 20. Kung residence: The summer residence of Col. Lin Chi Kung and his wife Debra Paget on Hopewell Road (which became incorrectly designated the "Chiang Kai-Shek mansion" in the next decade) was broken into, and Oriental rugs, lamps, clocks, dishes, candle holders, and a 12-gauge shotgun were taken.¹⁸⁹

Cottages and Cottagers

The many cottage owners around the shores and islands of lakes Wentworth and Winnepesaukee added to the vacation atmosphere. In 1961 "choice island lots only a six-minute boat ride to Wolfeboro" were offered for sale by local realtor C.M. Mixer. "These are on Melody (sometimes known as Varney) Island. This island of nearly 18 acres and more than 4,000 feet of shore frontage on Winnepesaukee commands an unsurpassed view of the lake and its mountains...." This was the second of the two large Wolfeboro islands (Keniston was developed c.1899) in Lake Winnepesaukee to be subdivided.

In August 1964 *Popular Boating* magazine featured an article written by Ned Bullock about cruising on Lake Winnepesaukee. A number of local businesses were mentioned, including the Pirates' Den, Northeast Marina, and Goodhue & Hawkins.

Among the visitors to town in the 1960s was the wife of the leader of Nationalist China, whose government was exiled on Formosa (Taiwan). Gertrude B. Hamm wrote this in a retrospective on events of 1965: "Madame Chiang Kai-Shek and her daughter-in-law, film star Debra Paget, slipped in and out of Wolfeboro almost without notice." While in Wolfeboro, Mme. Kai-Shek stayed at the former Helen Hopewell residence on Tips

Cove on Wolfeboro Neck, an area later (in the 1980s) subdivided as Embassy Estates.¹⁵ The August 1, 1968, number of the *Granite State News* printed a photograph of Debra Paget getting a lesson from Paul R. Hatch, operator of the Memorial Theatre, in the operation of an antique hand-cranked 1904 Power's Cameragraph film projector, a part of his display of old-time movie artifacts.¹⁶ It was noted that Paget was "spending part of each summer at her home on Lake Winnepesaukee."

pg 367
VOI I

pg 370
VOI I

Embassy Drive: Road in Embassy Estates on Wolfeboro Neck. Named by Smith & Kourian, developers, in the late 1980s. Name changed by property owners to Spruce Road on October 6, 1993.

Embassy Estates: Real estate development of 52 lots, later reduced to 44, platted on 127 acres in 1987 by Smith & Kourian following their purchase in 1986 from William B. Duncan, of Houston, of the former Hopewell property on Wolfeboro Neck, publicized (incorrectly) as the Chiang Kai-shek Estate. Duncan had purchased it in August 1986, from the Westland Oil Development Corporation of Houston, of which Chiang Kai-shek's nephew Louis Chung²⁰ was chief executive officer. The Embassy Estates development was presented to the Planning Board on June 16, 1987, and approved soon thereafter.²¹ Despite sales problems at the beginning, all of the shorefront and a number of the interior lots soon found buyers. By 1993 most of the former had been built upon, and the area was recognized as one with especially fine homes.

Additional background information: The Embassy Estates name was derived from the purchase of the Hopewell tract in 1949 by a member of the Chinese legation; the title was held in the name of the Westland Oil

Development Corporation. Madame Chiang Kai-shek [a.k.a. Soong Mayling], wife of the leader of Nationalist China, visited one or two times. The property was occasionally used by Col. Lin Chi Kung, who was married to Debra Paget, an American movie actress.²²

The centerpiece of the property was the summer home of Frank and Helen Hopewell, situated on Tips Cove and commanding a view across the lake toward Alton. In a feature about Wolfeboro's 150th anniversary, in *The Granite State Monthly*, October 1920, the Hopewell place was one of just a few town residences pictured. Apparently, in the 1950s and 1960s guest privileges were extended to the Houston chief of police, who with friends were occasional visitors as well. As the years went by, relatively few Wolfeboro residents, save for maintenance people, went there. An aura of mystery arose – the so-called "Chiang Kai-shek connection."

In the 1980s the purchase of the Hopewell home and surrounding acreage by Smith & Kourian was considered to be a coup. Subsequently, the property was named Embassy Estates to capitalize on the Mme. Chiang Kai-shek relationship (although this had nothing to do with any embassy).

1990, July 22: An auction at the "17-room home that for more than 30 years belonged to the Chinese Nationalist leader who led the fight against Mao Tse Tung's Communists until he was exiled to Taiwan. Chiang spent the rest of his life, from 1949 until 1975 in Taiwan and never visited the estate on Wolfeboro Neck. The house was empty now, but at one time, Chiang's wife, Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, his nephew, Louis Kung, and his wife, American actress Debra Paget, were frequent visitors there. The estate and 130 acres were purchased for an estimated \$5 million by local developers Smith, Smith and Kourian three years ago. The property was divided into 40 lots. The estate included a sandy beach with 571 feet of waterfront, 7.7 acres, an eight-bedroom home and a six-car garage. The bids were not realistic, according to John Schillereff of SRS Auctioneers. Two-thirds of the back-lots had been sold, and on Monday, they were still negotiating with two prospective buyers."

In actuality, only a few back lots had been sold, although the several hundred curiosity seekers and potential bidders who crowded the white auction tent bought quite a few of the furnishings and other items that had been trucked to the estate especially for the sale (and had nothing to do either with the Hopewell house or the Chiang Kai-shek family).²³

The main avenue through the development was called Embassy Drive, and a branch artery, Diplomat Drive. The offering of the Hopewell house by Hamel Realty at a price tag of close to \$3 million, and of interior (non-waterfront) lots in the \$100,000 range each, attracted little interest, although the shore properties sold one-by-one. At 6 a.m., April 2, 1992, the Hopewell cottage was demolished, and the Nolan Archibald family summer house was later built near where it had stood.

1993, August 28: The first annual meeting of the Embassy Estates Property Owners Association was held at the Wolfeboro Public Library. The group voted to discontinue the name Embassy Estates for its real estate tract on Wolfeboro Neck and to change the name of Embassy Drive to Wolfeboro Neck Road (this decision was later amended to Spruce Road, the name in use today). By the next day, a large display sign at the entrance to Embassy Estates had been taken down, as had been another smaller sign farther along Forest Road. Further, the property owners' group was renamed the Wolfeboro Neck Association. The name change was adopted by the town on October 6, 1993, at which time the Embassy Estates name passed into history.

pg 70
Vol II

Hopewell Point Road: Road on Wolfeboro Neck from Forest Road to Hopewell Point, in use by the turn of the century, but not named until c.1915.

1915: 500-foot section of new road constructed by the Highway Department of the town at a cost of \$700 to the account of Frank Hopewell, who reimbursed the town for the entire amount. Quite a bit of swamp land had to be filled.

1967: May have been called Rocky Cove Road at one time, c.1967.³³

1980s, late: Developers Smith & Kourian cut new road a few dozen feet to the south of the existing unpaved road (the section from Forest Road to near where Spruce Road intersects now), discontinued the Forest Road end of the old road and paved the new one; this was a part of

the laying out of lots in the formerly-named Embassy Estates development.

Hopewell Road: Seldom-used alternate name for Hopewell Point Road.³⁴

Hopewell Shore: Shore area on Hopewell Point. Town laid galvanized pipe there in the summer of 1966.³⁵ Replaced section of pipe in 1982.

Spruce Acres: Name in the 1950s and 1960s for the tract of land that was later platted as Embassy Estates (see listing) development.

Spruce Road: New name for Embassy Drive (see Embassy Drive and Embassy Estates listings) adopted on October 6, 1993. From Spruce Acres, an earlier name for the area.

Diplomat Drive: Name in late 1980s and early 1990s for Tips Cove Road, before it was changed in 1992 by residents and officially in 1993 by the town. In the area formerly known as Embassy Estates on Wolfeboro Neck. Named by Smith & Kourian, developers, for the area's assumed connection with the Chinese legation in 1949 and ensuing years.

Tips Cove: Cove or small bay on south side of Wolfeboro Neck at Hopewell Point. Serviced by Tips Cove Drive (formerly Diplomat Drive). Sometimes incorrectly spelled with an apostrophe, as Tip's.

Tips Cove Road: Road off Spruce Road in what was formerly known as the Embassy Estates development on Wolfeboro Neck. Road earlier called Diplomat Drive (name changed in 1992 on the petition of Patricia R. Merena and other abutters).

Wolfeboro Neck Road: No. 2. Name proposed to replace Embassy Drive by the Embassy Estates Property Owners Association on August 28, 1993. However, within the next few weeks the name Spruce Road was selected instead, as it was felt that the initial choice would be confused with Forest Road. Spruce Road was accepted by the town as the official name on October 6, 1993.



Hallowe'en party held in the former Hopewell house (so-called "Chiang Kai-shek estate") on Tips Cove, Wolfeboro Neck, sponsored by radio station WKLZ as a fund-raiser for the YMCA. (Sandy Martin photograph, October 1990)

Vol I

— Welcome to —
NEW HAMPSHIRE
Commentary

Access Dean Dexter's blog [here](#).

The Late Madame Chiang Kai-shek's Ties to Meredith and the New Hampshire Lakes Region

By DEAN DEXTER

The passing of Madame Chiang Kai-shek at age 105 in New York City on October 23rd (2003), brought a smattering of remembrances of her long, if somewhat distant ties to New Hampshire.

There were local newspaper stories about fancy property on Lake Winnepesaukee which she visited only occasionally and of her rare sightings in downtown Wolfeboro, browsing antique shops with her imposing Chinese military bodyguards. Also of note were the years a shy young Soong Mei-Ling spent with her sister, Ching-Ling, daughters of a Chinese Methodist missionary, spent at a summer school on Meredith Neck from 1908 to 1913.

With her husband, President Chiang Kai-shek, Madame Chiang created one of the modern world's premier power couples. The two made *Time* Magazine's "Man and Woman of the Year" in 1938. They were what Tracy and Hepburn were to the movies of that era, of what Franklin and Eleanor were to a nation working itself out of the Great Depression.

The U.S.-educated Madame Chiang dominated her nation's international diplomacy with a warm, charming personality and sleek good looks, always dressed in body hugging oriental silk. Her beauty, intelligence, and access to money, proved irresistible to Washington's most powerful figures, including New Hampshire's own legendary Senator Styles Bridges, a vigorous champion of the Nationalists cause in Washington.



Madame Chiang Kai-shek with Eleanor Roosevelt, the White House lawn, 1943

Madame Chiang's personal assets, with her husband's tough mindedness and billions of dollars of aid from Washington, fueled the Nationalists movement for a half century as it sought to over-throw Mao Tse-Tung's Communist regime on the Chinese mainland.

"I had never saw a Chinese woman before," the late Belknap County Commissioner, state rep and town Selectman Joseph F. Smith told the Meredith Historical Society at a September 4, 1962 meeting.

Smith, who later became a prominent lumber dealer and owner of the Wicwas Lodge at Meredith Center, had taken a job at Fred Beede's store on Meredith's Main Street and delivered groceries by horse and wagon to customers around town.

One of Smith's stops was at a school for girls operated by Hattie Moses on Pleasant Street on the Bay between what is now Meredith Mooring Condominiums and property stretching up the hill across from Gould Street.

Smith said he would often give rides on the delivery wagon to girls enrolled at the school as they walked to and from the village. Mei-Ling and her sister were among them. They were very pretty and quite a curiosity for a sleepy little village like Meredith at the turn of the century, he said.

It wasn't until the 1930s that Joe, with his brother Frederick Smith, longtime headmaster of New Hampton School, and their wives were at a movie at Laconia's Colonial Theater when during the Pathe newsreel a clip was shown featuring China's President Chiang Kai-shek and his beautiful young wife.

"Hey, that's Mei-Ling," Fred said, elbowing Joe in the next seat.

"By gory. I can't believe it. How could you forget her," Joe, said.

James J. Kiepper, Styles Bridges' biographer, tells of the high Washington influence Chiang's Nationalists movement held among key members of the U.S. Senate, including Bridges, New Hampshire Congressman Louis Wyman, a former Bridges aide, Sen. Joe McCarthy and others. At the center of these key players was one Ling-Chieh "Louis" Kung, nephew of Madame Chiang. Kung was the son of one of Madame Chiang's sisters, who had married China's premier banker, K.K. Kung.

"I guess you could say Louie Kung was the bagman for Chiang's Nationalists movement in Washington," Kiepper says. "He funded the lobbying operations in Washington. He gave a lot of money to a lot people in support of Chiang's cause."

It was Louie Kung, Kiepper says, who used the property on Lake Winnepesaukee the most. Kung was married to the 1950s movie star Debra Paget. The daughter-in-law of Styles Bridges, Marion, wife of Styles Jr., was close to Paget. She and the children would visit the estate often.

Kiepper says Wyman and Bridges owned property adjacent to the Kung/Chiang estate, then known as "Spruce Acres," although the Kung/Chiang estate was separated by a thick grove of trees, for privacy.

"There was always some question about the true ownership of that beautiful lakefront property and its links to the Nationalist government and the Chiang family," Kiepper says. "I bet there were 500 hundred feet of shorefront at 'Spruce Acres.' if not more." The old mansion was raised and the area redeveloped in the 1980s under the name Embassy Estates.

Kiepper says he was at Bridges House, the former home of the senator in East Concord (now the state-owned official residence of New Hampshire governors), a day or two after the death of the senator's widow, Doloris, in November of 1969.

"Marion Bridges asked me to come down as Louie Kung was coming in. Louie flew into Concord Airport on a white Learjet and we all sat there by the fireplace talking and then suddenly Louie pulls out the biggest wad of hundred dollar bills I ever saw. He peels off a couple and tells the Bridges boys, 'I want you to go out and buy every white rose in the City of Concord that you can find and take them up and put them on Doloris's grave. And they did.'"

As for Joe Smith, as he told family and friends years later: "Well, you'll never know how far a girl riding on a horse-drawn wagon in Meredith, New Hampshire can go in life. So be nice to 'em all."

A resident of Meredith and Concord, Dean Dexter is a former Belknap County Commissioner and state representative who writes about history and politics



Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai Shek and Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell, Commanding General, China Expeditionary Forces, on the day following Japanese bombing attack (Doolittle Raid). Maymyo, Burma., April 19, 1942.



U.S. Senator Styles Bridges, R-NH., Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, House Speaker Joe Martin, Vice President Richard M. Nixon, 1943.

- This piece was first published in the *The Citizen*, Laconia, N.H., Thursday, November 6, 2003:  [Link to story](#)
- It also appeared on the OpEd Page of the (Manchester, N.H.) *Union Leader*, Monday, November 24, 2003:  [Link to story](#)
- Local story on Madame Chiang, *The Meredith News*, Thursday, October 30, 2003 issue:  [Link to story](#)
- Madame Chiang's obituary in the *New York Times*, Friday, October 24, 2003:  [Link to story](#)

Access Dean Dexter's blog [here](#).

Posted Thursday, November 6, 2003, 7:00 p.m, updated November 3, 2006

[Return to NH Commentary Home Page](#)

Copyright © 2003 NH Commentary.Com
P.O. Box 706
Concord, NH 03302