

Cutts of South Street

Compiled and written by David Palance 2024

Elwin F. Cutts is one of Milford's most accomplished citizens. He was raised on the homestead as it was called including the land on both sides of South St. just south of the old pumping station, now the DPW building. The property was 60 acres and was used for a large dairy business. The house, barn and a milking room was located on the same side of the road as the pumping station but is no longer standing. This house was originally built by David Needham in 1817 who resided there with his son David Jr. until the father died in 1859. The house was occupied by Charles Woodward and his wife, Lilla Peabody in 1873 then passed to the father of Elwin Fisher Cutts, Elber R. Cutts in 1886. Figure 1 shows "E.R. Cutts" between Great Brook and South St. just beyond the "Pumping Station M. Water Co."



Figure 1 Detail of the 1901 map in the Ramsdell Town History

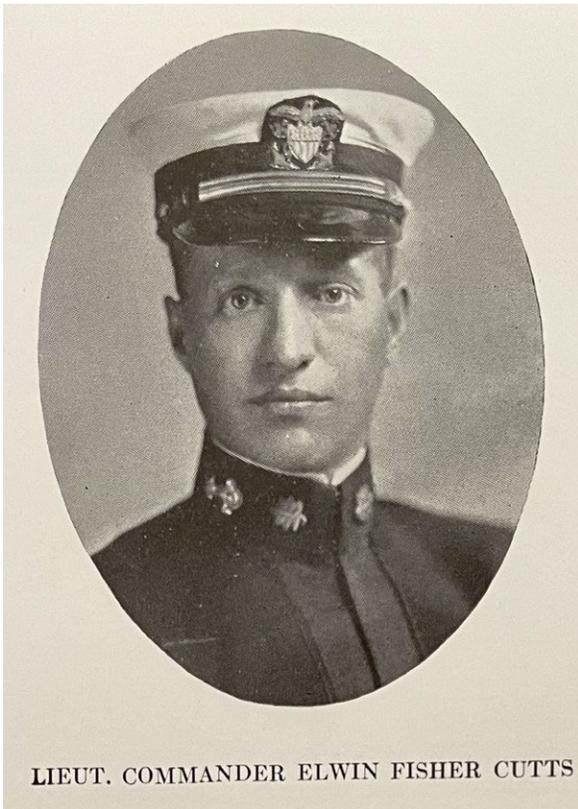
Elber Reuben Cutts was born 8Oct1862 in Newport NH just outside of the town of Claremont where his parents are buried. He married Clara E. Fisher originally of Sunapee then Milford in 1884. Elber bought out a small milk route in 1887 and retailed milk for Milford and area for 27 years from the farm on South St. After this he sold milk wholesale and continued to farm until past his 77th birthday. He was especially interested in Ayrshire cattle and held a large, registered stock. Elber and wife Clara were members of the Odd Fellows and Rebekah lodges and active in the Baptist church. Many children of the day knew and loved this couple as they had created and maintained Milford's first swimming hole located at the dam behind the old pumping station. Generations later this swimming hole was expanded, and a pool created with a feed from the Great Brook beyond the dam.

Elber had two children with Clara, the subject of this article, Elwin Fisher Cutts born in Amherst on 5Sep1885, and Ethel Marion born in Milford 31Jan1891. Elber had a sister, Mary Etta Cutts and a brother Archie L. Cutts of Marlow. He also had a half-sister, Ella Edna Cutts and a half brother, Charles Andrew Cutts Sr. of Milford who lived in the house across the street on an acre of land granted by his half-brother. Charles A. Cutts, Sr. was Barbara Tortorelli's maternal grandfather and this is where she grew up as well. She now lives on Osgood Road with her husband, Retired Fire Chief Richard Tortorelli.

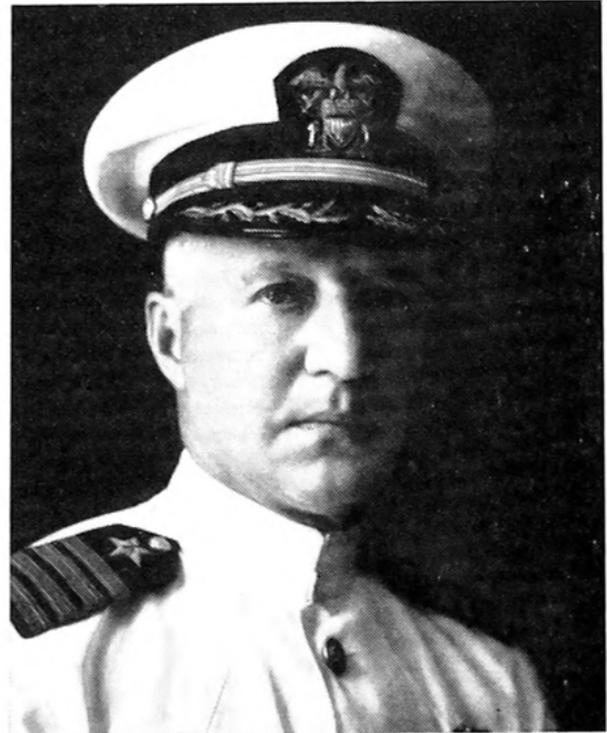
Elwin F. Cutts was raised in Milford Public Schools and graduated valedictorian of what was then called the "New High School" or Bales Centennial School. He spent two years at Dartmouth College until the family money ran thin and he had to return to working on the farm. Appointed to the US Naval Academy and graduated with the Annapolis class of 1908. He soon found himself sailing around the world in what was called "Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet". From "Milford in the Great War" we learn that Elwin Cutts served on the USS Louisiana and then on the USS Dubuque, until he volunteered for submarine service. He was in command of the submarine "C-2" and then of the "K -1" until 1914 when he was assigned to the Naval Academy as an instructor. Later he was in command of the USS Fulton and during the war commanded the USS Savannah, a submarine tender in European waters. By the end of the war, he had the rank of Lieutenant Commander. The letter to the editor from Donald W. Strickland having the honor of calling Elwin his grand-father-in-law, is quoted here:

"In October of 1941 Elwin, then a full captain, commanded the USS Pennsylvania, the flagship of the Pacific Fleet into drydock at Pearl Harbor. He had been captain of the Pennsylvania for a year, and the fact that the Navy chose to put him in charge of such an important flagship is some measure of how highly he was regarded. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor some two months later-the Pennsylvania was the least damaged of all the battleships due to her protected location in drydock. She was the first of the big battleships to get under way and begin to seek revenge. By that time Elwin had been

transferred to the huge submarine base at New London Connecticut During all of World War II Elwin was commander of the largest submarine base in the world He must have complained bitterly about not being given a chance to get into the real fighting, but his country needed him to run the base where every WWII submariner was trained For a few dizzying weeks in 1941, Elwin Cutts of Milford, N H was temporary Commander in Chief of the entire United States fleet, reporting directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and President Roosevelt He was given this temporary assignment when the head of the Navy was sacked in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack“



LIEUT. COMMANDER ELWIN FISHER CUTTS



ELWIN F. CUTTS

The account returns to Milford, where Marie Elise Riles (1887-1967) would summer in Mont Vernon from her home in Florida. She met Elwin Cutts in town and married, then settling on the farm on South St. The couple had two children, Lucy Elise (Cutts) Moore, born 22Feb1920 and died, 17Jun1967 in Maryland where she shares a grave with her husband, USN Rear Admiral Raymond Atkinson Moore of Texas.

Elwin had the distinction of being Milford's highest ranking military officer in World War II Elwin and Elise returned to the beloved home on South Street where they lived until their deaths in the 1960s Their two children. Bob and Lucy also chose Navy lives Bob went to Annapolis He received the nation's third highest decoration for bravery (the Silver Star) in

World War II and retired to California. Elwin's son, Robert E. Cutts is remembered in the account of Milford in WWII volume as follows:

“He spent a year in the Milford grammar school in 1926 and attended public and private schools in this country, Hawaii, and China as he followed his father from one station to another.

He prepared at Severn School in Maryland for Annapolis and graduated there in 1938 as an ensign. Cutts was stationed at Manila in the Philippine Islands when war was declared and was transferred to the submarine Sea Raven, based at Australia. He immediately saw action against the enemy in Philippine waters and made five long war patrols in the East Indian waters and China Sea during 1942.

He returned to California early in 1943 where his submarine was overhauled at Mare Island Navy Yard. He started off again in May as executive officer of a submarine and made four patrols off Japan proper and the Marshall Islands. In the spring of 1944, he returned to New London and was assigned to the new submarine, Blower, and sailed back to the Pacific. He made two more patrols in the south China Sea and revisited Australia and on V-J Day was in Subic Bay, Philippine Islands.

Commander, Robert E. Cutts has the Silver Star Medal for outstanding service, the Army Distinguished Unit Badge, and the Submarine Combat Insignia with seven Stars.

He married Claire Millette of Montreal, Canada at Vallejo, California, on March 27, 1943.”



ROBERT E. CUTTS

Robert's sister, Lucy married Randy Moore, a Naval Academy classmate of her brother's, also a decorated. WWII sailor, "Randy" was promoted in 1965 to the rank of Rear Admiral Interestingly, both Robert "Bob" Cutts and Randy Moore chose careers in the Submarine Service This speaks well for the kind of role model Elwin was.

As of 1995 all that was left of the farm on South St. was a cellar hole that is now the Kincade Auto body shop. The farmhouses on both sides of the street were burned down as a training exercise as the remaining Cutts descendants chose other fields that did not involve farming.



CHARLES A. CUTTS

Charles A. Cutts Sr. the half-brother of Elber came to Milford as a six-year-old boy in 1891. His father, Andrew J. Cutts, had died 2 years prior and his mother, Emma L. Putnam had remarried and died in less than a year. Charles was then sent down to Milford to live with his older half-brother on the dairy farm on South Street. Elber was then only 22 years old. Elber divided out an acre of land across the street on the farmland and gifted it to his young brother in 1912 when he married Roma Hutchinson of Lyndeborough and where he lived until he died in 1956. He fathered a son and three daughters. Charles A. Cutts Jr. continued the farm goods transportation business until he joined his cousins in the service of the country in 1943.

Charles A Cutts Jr. also served in the military of the WWII period. Sergeant Charles Andrew Cutts, the son of Charles A. and Roma (Hutchinson) Cutts was born in Milford, October 29, 1923, and graduated from the Centennial High School in 1941. He attended the New England Aircraft School in Boston for some fifteen weeks, passed a civil service examination in airplane maintenance, and went to Rome Air Depot in New York to work on airplanes. He entered service at Manchester, NH March 9, 1943, went to Fort Devins on March 16th, then to Miami Beach in Florida for training. He attended radio school in Scott Field, Illinois, graduated and was sent to Camp Luna in New Mexico, as a radio mechanic. His next assignment in January 1944, was as a radio operator at Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Florida, in a boat unit doing Air-Sea Rescue work. After a time, he left for the Caribbean Sea and was stationed on Exuma Island and Caicos Island for similar radio work.

He returned in May 1945, to Morrison Field where he worked as a clerk in the orderly room until discharged February 23, 1946. He died March 19, 1977 where he was living in West Roxbury, Mass.

This property is important as several prominent residents relate to the property and it is responsible for fond memories for many generations who enjoyed the swimming hole.

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