

The
CLIFF HOUSE
Resort & Spa

UNFOLDING OF A LEGEND
Cliff House Chronology



Sometimes the history of a place and of a family extend so far across time that their identities intertwine and become one. Such a place is The Cliff House, and the family is Weare. Elsie Jane Weare, great grandmother of current innkeeper Kathryn, realized her dream and opened The Cliff House in 1872. There have been many changes at the resort since that time. Sensitivity to the changing needs of guests, and a willingness to evolve, have been hallmarks of The Cliff House success story. With each new generation of the Weare family, Elsie Jane's formula endures: clean rooms, fine food, fresh air, and personal hospitality — all in an incomparable scenic location.



The story begins in the 1800's...

1866: Civil War has ended. Boston and Maine Railroad is about to add a spur to York, Maine. Elsie Jane Weare, wife of Captain Theodore Weare, is inspired by the railroad and invests their money in Bald Head Cliff and begins planning a resort.

1872: The Cliff House opens. Rates in this first year are \$6.00 per week, per person, and include all three meals. Elsie Jane runs the hotel and farm, invests in real estate and manages the family business, all while raising seven children and looking after her husband, who has become an invalid. The Cliff House reputation spreads through all of the fine families of the day and even across the Atlantic, to England and the Continent.

1910: Elsie Jane (then in her late 70's), turns control of The Cliff House over to her son Charles. Charles begins a modernization campaign that results in indoor plumbing, electric lights, a bowling alley, with the first private baths in the area. As automobiles become more common, Charles erects individual garages and has a gas pump installed for the convenience of his motoring guests.

1920's and 30's: The Cliff House thrives through the roaring 20's and even in the shaky 30's.

1940's: The Cliff House is shuttered for the duration of World War II and then drafted. U.S Army Corps of Engineers takes over the property, builds a radar station and keeps a 24-hour vigil for Nazi submarines. In January and February of 1942 German U-Boats sink 152 Allied ships in North Atlantic waters alone. The military position at Bald Head Cliff is so important, the Weares are barred from their own property.

1946: By the end of the war, substantial damage and severe neglect have taken their toll. Rumors flare that The Cliff House may never reopen. Charles, disheartened by the state of his land, and nearly broke after years without the income of his family business, places an ad in the Wall Street Journal: For Sale. 144 rooms, 90 acres, over 2500' of ocean frontage for just \$50,000. There are no takers! So Charles turns the property over to his son Maurice. Money is so scarce, Maurice even hand-rolls the mile-long blacktop driveway.

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1948: Maurice marries Charlotte Williams, The Cliff House secretary, and together they labor tirelessly and overcome countless obstacles in order to restore the resort's prestige.

1960's: The area's first swimming pool is built at The Cliff House in 1960. The first motel in the area to be included in a resort setting is built in 1963. Maurice and Charlotte also preside over the greatest change of all: The top two floors of the inn are raised and the kitchen demolished. The Cliff House becomes primarily a motel and coffee shop, using the inn's remaining ground floor to serve breakfast and lunch. Maurice and Charlotte keep The Cliff House spirit alive and stay in step with the fast moving and uncertain times.

1974: The fourth generation of Weare family Maine innkeepers succeeds to The Cliff House directorship, as Kathryn M. Weare steps in. Kathryn files a master plan for the resort's future and launches a bold program of upgrading and expansion.

1990: The season opens with a new entrance and lobby area. A grand staircase connects the Ocean Terrace to a new dining room, as do two elevators. A major conference room and a new recreation area with gift shop, fitness room, sauna and indoor pool are added. As well as a substantial number of guest rooms, all with balconies overlooking the sweeping Maine coastline.

May 2002: The Cliff Spa opens on the site of the original hotel. With 32 over-sized guest rooms with gas-fired stoves, this new adult-only building features a 75-foot indoor lap pool, a vanishing edge outdoor pool with spectacular coastal views, indoor and outdoor whirlpool, a labyrinth, shower and locker areas with individual steam and sauna rooms, an expanded nail salon, fitness center and ten treatment rooms.

September 2004: The long awaited connector project between the main building and spa building is completed. This superlative addition to the conference facilities links most guest rooms, banquet facilities, ballroom and meeting rooms.

April 2012: The Resort opens for its 140th season.