

Niagara Falls extinguishes a bright star

By **Gordon B. Seavey**
Staff Correspondent

For a small town 60 years ago, there was little dramatic news as the small population (3,000 in 1930) of Westford participated in its regular affairs — farming, working in various mills and quarries — and went about its daily chores.

But when police called from upper New York state to a prominent townsman that his brother had slipped (or jumped) over Niagara Falls to almost certain death, it was most upsetting.

The officials told William Reuben Taylor that the body of his brother, John Adams Taylor, was found in the river below the falls. He and his brother-in-law, Frederick A. Snow of West Chelmsford, were asked to identify the remains of Professor Taylor.

The deceased was only 41 and married. He was an instructor of English, University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, but had been on sabbatical for a year. He had spent most of the time studying English at Ann Arbor, Mich.

During the summer he went abroad to travel and study. His wife, Almira Jewett Taylor of Cincinnati, had been unable to accompany him. The couple was married July 12, 1921.

Professor Taylor had left Westford, where he had been paying a visit to his relatives, to rejoin his wife in Cincinnati. He was in the best of spirits when he left, his relatives said.

They had last heard from the professor from Buffalo. After waiting a week for further word from him, his relatives went to seek him.

Professor Taylor was a native of Westford and

was one of the most prominent men that the town has produced. A graduate of Westford Academy and Amherst College, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and of Emerson College of Oratory, he was at once a brilliant speaker and a learned teacher. Professor Taylor had held several instructorships before going to the University of North Dakota.

Mrs. W. Reuben Taylor, a sister-in-law of Professor Taylor, said at the time that the members of his family were at a loss to account for his death. She said her husband and Frederick Snow had telephoned her and Mrs. Snow concerning the identification, which they said had not been established beyond a doubt because of the fact that the body had been taken from the river over a week earlier.

Gordon Seavey is a Westford native and a frequent contributor to these pages.