Finally, in 1878 a Mr. Jeffrey of Meriden erected a wooden observation tower. The tower was twenty square feet (2 m^2) at the base and extended sixty feet (18 m) upwards up to a ten foot square (1 m^2) platform at the top. The walls of the ground floor were enclosed and ice cream and refreshments were sold. The upper platforms were open. A telescope was available and a 15¢ admission charge was collected for the opportunity to climb the tower and use the 'spy glass.'

It seems the Jeffrey's Tower was very popular although short-lived. On February 3, 1880, a severe blizzard destroyed the structure. It was not rebuilt and the broken timbers became tangled with vines and bushes. The first floor remained standing. Charles Ethan Porter, brother-in-law of Jeffrey used it as his studio. He painted still life paintings here during the winter or when it rained.

After Mr. Porter died, the small structure fell into disrepair and eventually disappeared. During the next 60 years two homes were built on the south side of the summit but the tower was not rebuilt.

Original wooden tower

Statistics

20 feet square at the base

60 feet (18 m) high

The bottom was enclosed with a south side window and door. The top was not enclosed.

Builder

Mr. Jeffrey

Original owner

Mr. Jeffrey

Original use

Used as viewing platform and refreshment stand; later, after the tower was destroyed, the ground floor was used as an art studio by Charles Ethan Porter

Important dates

1877 Students of Rockville High School's hope for a tower published in the Rockville High School Magazine

1878 Original wooden tower erected

1880 Original wooden tower destroyed in blizzard

1889 Sometime after, the surviving ground floor is used by Charles Ethan Porter as a studio

1923 The structure 'disappears'

1937 Start of construction for the Memorial Tower

1939 Memorial Tower completed and dedicated