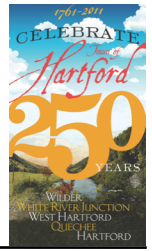




Hartford Historical Society

The Garipay House • 1461 Maple Street
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HARTFORD • QUECHEE • WEST HARTFORD • WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER



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SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

March-April 2025

Canadian Families Merge in Hartford

By George Miller

My grandmother, Hazel Mary Jacobs Miller, was born in Granby, Quebec on November 16, 1913. During her childhood, she moved to Montreal, Quebec. Not too many years ago, I was going through old family photos and saw one of a classroom of children in uniforms in a parochial school. The picture didn't seem to fit with the rest so I looked closely and spotted my grandmother sitting at one of the desks. I believe she was about ten years old.

Let me explain further. This is where two stories come together. The first story is that of my grandfather's family who were living on a farm here in Hartford. This part of my family came down from Stanbridge Station, Quebec, Canada in 1907 when George Nelson Miller, and his wife Bertha Best Miller, bought the farm where my wife and I live in Hartford. They had three daughters -- Glenna, Sadie and Christine.

Years passed and George wanted a son so he talked Bertha into having another child. Bertha decided that she wanted to get something out of this deal, so she said that if George would buy a sideboard, a ringer washing machine and a treadle sewing machine to make life a bit easier, she would have another child.



The families of Hazel and Chester Miller came from Canada and met in Hartford where Hazel's mother Annie Jacobs married Chester's father, George Miller. Step-siblings Hazel and Chester went to the Jericho Schoolhouse and married in 1932.

To their great surprise, she delivered twins -- a girl, Marjorie, and a son they named Chester (my grandfather).

Bertha became ill with what was later to be diagnosed as tuberculosis. I found out about this years later when a neighbor told us that Bertha slept on the porch for two years because of the illness.

On October 9, 1924, George and Bertha Miller headed south with their three younger children and ended up in Orlando, FL. George did not find work, and the schools were full so the children were unable to go to school that winter. Chester said he spent his days climbing orange trees and playing outside.

Still seeking work, George brought his family back north and, somewhere around Hartford, CT, Bertha took very ill. My grandfather told me that his

mother died of pneumonia. It may have been taboo for Chester to talk about tuberculosis in those years, or he just didn't know she had that disease. Bertha died April 10, 1926.

So, George Nelson Miller and his children Chester and Marjorie returned to Hartford, VT while daughter Christine stayed in Connecticut. George found that his previous farm was for sale again so, along with son-in-

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From the Editor . . .

April 19 will mark two hundred and fifty years since colonial militias chased British regulars back to Boston after the battles of Lexington and Concord. June 17 will be the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill, which was heard from the roof of Thomas Hazen's house on Christian Street. You are invited to visit our website where there are new pages to announce events throughout the state celebrating this commemorative year.

It's our good fortune that George Miller's retirement from dairy farming last year has given him time to write, and this issue he shares warm memories of his grandmother Hazel Miller. She lived a rugged life in the Jericho District with grit and determination.

And our thanks to Sherry Nott who researched the history of the Jericho District as a student at Hartford High School in 1957 and shares his paper this issue. He asks that we remember that it was, "written by a high school kid." The paper was given to us by David Cate whose father Weston Cate was Sherry's teacher.

From 1882 to 1888, A.A. Earle edited and published *The Landmark* newspaper in White River Junction with wit and wisdom. He is the primary voice in the feature we call *Yesterday's News*, and this issue we have some notes on his career and samples of his humor.

The Hartford Historical Society sends kind regards to the family of founding member Muriel Farrington who died last October 28 at age 83. Muriel was deeply interested in history and worked as an archaeologist on projects in Virginia and Vermont. She also served on the board of the Vermont Archaeological Society. She has remained active in the HHS and will be greatly missed.

At 7 p.m. on Wednesday April 9, Leo Tucker will describe, "The Navy and the Marines in the Revolutionary War," at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ. Please join us.

Scott Fletcher, Editor

Play

The Landmark, January 14, 1932

More time is being devoted to a study of play than at any previous period in history. Educators are seriously discussing the value of physical recreation. Every school has its playtime. Progressive teachers are eagerly looking for new games. Schools have special courses in games and plays, and every graduate is expected to be familiar with the latest play theories and methods of working them out. How little do we expect from a boy who does not play vigorously, and how true it is that such a boy seldom develops into a virile, aggressive man, joying in strong manhood, and fearlessly meeting the battles of life. Girls need play as much, and even more than boys, for in their quieter lives they miss opportunities of gaining and maintaining health and strength. When girls once learn organized games, they enter into them with much enthusiasm.

The Mission Statement of the Hartford Historical Society

To acquire, identify and preserve
information and artifacts related to
Hartford's past and communicate knowledge
of local history through programs,
publications, and other interaction with the
community.



Hartford Historical Society

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When Electricity Arrived in the Upper Valley

By Mary Nadeau

Steve Taylor's talk on November 13 was entitled, "How Electric Power Revolutionized Life in the Upper Valley." After World War I, when electricity began to appear in New England, he described the situation as "two civilizations," those with and those without power. During the 1930s, only ten percent of rural Vermont had electricity. The rest of the population lived as they had in the 1880s. This was especially hard for women.

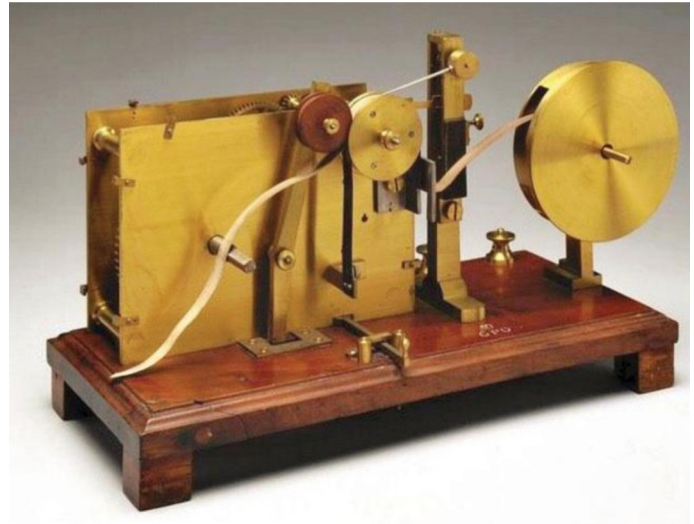
Some communities attempted to utilize water power, but as the levels of rivers rose and fell seasonally, it wasn't a reliable source. Wood heat was the norm, and wood became a local "currency" because it could be bartered. Steve noted that the use of wood "soaked up" a lot of local labor.

Fireplaces were very inefficient, but in the 1840s, box stoves began to appear. The manufacture in 1881 of the Glenwood stove in Taunton, Massachusetts, provided not only a cook stove, but it included an oven and a resource to heat water. Later, water was heated with a coil placed around the fire box. After the advent of indoor plumbing, if the draft was accidentally left open, cold water would spew out of the pipes, leading to the sign in bathrooms "Stand Up Before Flushing!"

Water, of course, was a great necessity. Those fortunate to have gravity-fed sources were lucky, but in other homes, fetching water from the family well was a woman's chore. Sufficient water had to be carried into the house for cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and the weekly bath. It was a daunting task. Into the turn of the Twentieth Century, the infant mortality rate was twenty-five percent until mothers were told to boil diapers, another time-consuming and exhausting chore, since everything had to be washed and wrung out by hand.

Life revolved around the availability of light, and women were tasked with lighting candles or the kerosene lamps, cleaning the chimneys and trimming the wicks. Kerosene has a strong odor, and getting rid of it was another difficult challenge. Chores had to be done in daylight, and people generally rose with the arrival of dawn and went to bed when night fell.

Refrigeration was accomplished by cutting ice on ponds and rivers and then storing it packed in sawdust inside ice houses. This was a significant industry, and quantities of ice were shipped to Boston before being



The first telegraph service arrived in Vermont in 1851 when a line connected Springfield, MA with an office in Brattleboro. That year, the line came along the Connecticut River to White River Junction and then north to Burlington. The telegraph office in Brattleboro had to move across the street because the owner of the building feared that this new electrical device might attract lightning.

transported to the South and even to parts of the Caribbean. Closer to home, the ice man would arrive with huge chunks of ice, which he would chisel to fit into the family ice box. Steve reminisced about so-called ice box cookies. Dough was rolled into a cylinder, chilled and then sliced before baking.

Procuring water for livestock was another huge task. Farmers with gravity-fed supplies were in great shape, but others had to fetch water in buckets. During the winter, holes were chopped in the ice on ponds or streams so that the cows could drink.

Raw milk was placed in big, flat pans, a process known as "setting milk" so that the cream rose to the top before being shipped to creameries. The skimmed milk was then fed to a farmer's pigs. But in 1846, H.P. Hood of Derry, New Hampshire, suggested that the milk be transported by trains to more distant creameries, industrializing the process. It was transported in metal cans placed on milk trains that made up to 50 pickup stops en route to Boston.

In 1932, President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced a plank to get rural America electrified. By executive order, the Rural Electrification Administration of 1936 provided loans to wire up rural areas. The money had

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*Hazel and Chester Miller with their son, Raymond, in 1949.
Chester and Hazel bought this farm in the Jericho District of
Hartford from their parents George and Annie Miller in 1936.*

law Avison Lyman and his daughter Glenna Lyman, he bought it back and resumed farming the fields he had left two and a half years before. Chester and Marjorie re-enrolled in the Jericho schoolhouse on May 16, 1927.

At this time George Nelson Miller was a widower and still had at least two children in the house. This is where the families of George Miller and Annie Jacobs (with young daughter Hazel Mary Jacobs) came together. Hazel's mother, Annie, had lost her husband Joe Jacobs on December 24, 1926. Hazel told me that her father had been injured in a mill accident and died fairly soon afterwards. George and Annie were married, and Hazel came to live in Hartford with George's children Chester and Marjorie.

Chester and Hazel both enrolled in the Jericho school house and Hazel graduated from the school on June 12, 1930. It is unclear how long Chester attended. Hazel went on to Hartford High School and boarded during the week with the Colodny family who owned Colodny's Department Store. Hazel helped with housekeeping to pay for her room and board. It is unclear if she finished high school.

On weekends, Hazel returned to the farm to live with the blended Miller family. She and Chester spent their teenage years together. Some accounts show that Hazel had a few boyfriends, which seemingly made

Chester jealous even though they were stepbrother and stepsister. After a time, they began courting and were married on June 27, 1932.

Once married, Chester and Hazel worked for Mrs. Burbank on a farm in North Pomfret that she ran with her nephew, Milton Bassett. Chester described to me how cold it was in that old farmhouse during the first winter. There was no insulation and they just had a flannel sheet to sleep under. Chester said they would have frozen to death if it hadn't been their first year of marriage.

Chester and Hazel worked on that farm for a year and a half and then had an opportunity to move back to the farm with George and Annie. Things went well and, on May 20, 1935, Hazel gave birth to her first and only child, my father Raymond Miller.

Hazel weighed Raymond every week during his first year and recorded his rapid growth in her diary. He was quite a big boy. She also recorded neighborhood activities such as births and bridal showers.

I can imagine the hardships Hazel went through keeping house with her mother and husband. Life was a constant routine of cooking, cleaning and farm chores, but Hazel was a strong woman. She was barely five feet tall but she had the work ethic of a French Canadian. She churned butter a couple times a week, made meals and took care of a child.

In 1936, Chester and Hazel bought the farm from George and Annie who moved to a small farm in Enfield, NH. Sadly, George Miller died of a heart attack in 1939, which made Chester the head of the family at age twenty-five.

Chester and Raymond would go coon hunting at night and Hazel would skin the raccoons for half the money they got for pelts when they sold them. Hazel also enjoyed deer hunting with Chester and Raymond.

Hazel worked with Chester making maple syrup and told stories of sleeping under the evaporator and taking turns boiling late at night. Hazel helped with milking as the dairy herd expanded, and Chet added a milk room to the barn.

They began to sell canned milk in the 1940s. In the very early 1960s, the farm produced some 200 to 500 gallons of maple syrup a year, and harvested eight to ten acres of potatoes. They sold hundreds of bushels of

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Hartford's Pundit Laureate Made News Fun

In 1882, A.A. Earle brought his folksy writing style to White River Junction and took over a paper called the *Sun*, founded in December 1881 by Royal Cummings. When Earle published his first issue on March 18, 1882, it carried the name, *The Landmark*.

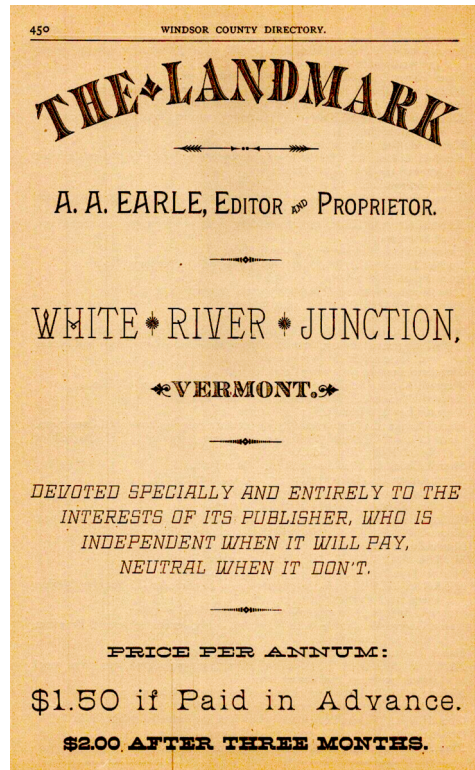
Earle and his wife purchased a home that still stands on Maplewood Terrace in White River Junction, and he began a vibrant weekly dialog with local citizens. In the first issue he wrote, "As yet, we are a total stranger in this locality and must learn who is who and what is what before we begin any big things."

He solicited news from his readers and paid two cents per printed item. Pages two, three, six and seven carried local news, opinions, and advertising. A publisher in New York filled the other four pages with national news and advertising, and sent the half-finished papers to White River Junction every Friday so Earle could add his content and distribute final editions the next day.

A.A. Earle published *The Landmark* until December 1888 when he sold the paper to Charles R. Jamason. Earle then moved to Newport, VT looking for a less demanding paper to suit his declining health. In 1892, he sold his final publishing venture and died.

The following note appeared in the *St. Albans Messenger*.

"A.A. Earle, one of the oldest newspaper men, in point of time connected with the business, in the state, died at Newport, Sunday, March 13, aged 66 years. Mr. Earle had been in Vermont journalistic life nearly 60 years and had been editor of a number of papers, the last being the *Express and Standard*, of Newport, which he sold last fall to Maj. Grout. Deceased was always an eccentric man and his utterances were of that peculiar character that caused every one to regard him as a dangerous critic. He was perfectly fearless and his command of epithet was surprising."



These clips show how Earle made *The Landmark* sparkle.

Spirit of the Age, March, 1882

Mr. Earle says he will issue the first number of his new religious paper, "*The Landmark*" at White River Junction, March 18th. A religious paper by A.A. Earle! God save the readers!

The Landmark, March 18, 1882

We have done some good already. The announcement that we were to publish a religious paper, has set brother McMaster calling on the name of the Lord. Would that this call was the pervading spirit of the age.

The Landmark, March 12, 1887

W. Howard Tucker is no longer agent of the Associated Press, he having been discharged March 1. A.E. Watson taking his place will

hereafter rattle around in his shoes. Watson has just ability enough to fill the position in good shape. Tucker had too much.

The Landmark, Aug 19, 1882

Bean's cat died Saturday afternoon. No other paper has this news.

The Landmark, Aug 19, 1882

S.L. Farman has given our wife some cucumbers. What does that mean?

The Landmark, Aug 27, 1887

Phillip O'Mara is raising side whiskers. Several strands are already through the skin.

The Landmark, December 17, 1887

We have six new clean shirts.

The Landmark, December 1, 1888

We express our thanks to the legion who love us for the warm support given. We have made as much money here as we ever made before in the same time and that when we could do but little more than plan the work and make ourself agreeable to everybody. Especially have we regard for the town of Hartford, which has given us a large support and shown a steady increase. We leave without an enemy. We had two or three once but they are dead now.

Early Days of the Jericho District

By Sherry Nott

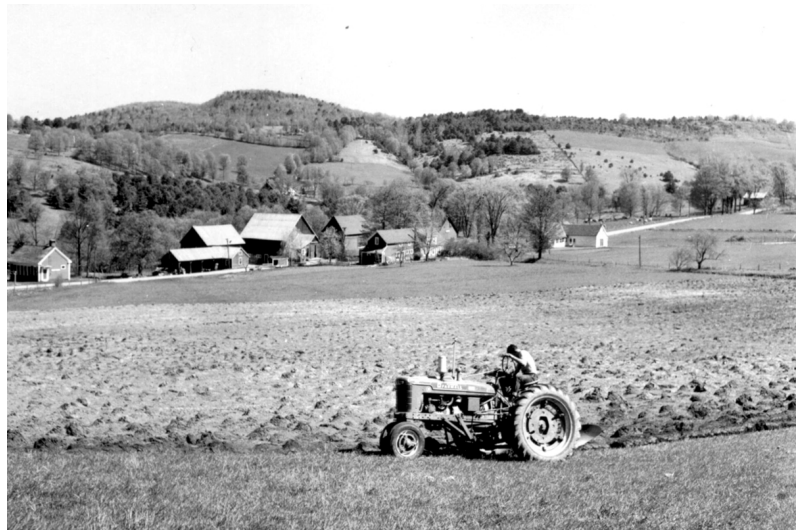
Jericho is located in the northwest section of the town of Hartford. It is now a strictly rural farming area, lying in the Vermont hills four miles from the nearest settlement of any size which is Hartford village. Although the generally accepted boundaries are those houses and territory upon the dirt road that runs from Route 5 up around the hills and back to the main route again, I will take Jericho as that part only within the boundaries of school district number seven.

Reverend Aaron Hutchinson, who was the first Congregationalist minister in the first church in the town of Hartford, which was located at the Center of the Town and built in 1774, is said to have given the names to the localities of Jericho and Dothan. Tucker said that Hutchinson preached in these two areas at one time. He could very well have done so in Dothan, but it is doubtful that he ever did so in Jericho, as there is no other record of preaching in the area until 1841.

Why the settlers came to the area of Jericho to start their new lives I have been able to get only a hint. It is true, however, that most of the early farmers settled on hills or at least in the higher elevations. The main reason was the difference of the forests. The low river valleys were apt to be swamps and covered with thick growths of softwoods like pine, hemlock, and spruce, while the highlands were covered with forests of hardwoods that weren't as thick.

The opinion prevailed that hill lands, being thickly covered with vegetable mold formed by dropping leaves, were much more fertile than the land covered by the soft pines, and the idea proved to be true of Jericho. The hills, being much easier to clear and make ready for the plow because of the thinner growth of trees, were settled first. The hardwoods furnished more useable timber products such as charcoal, potash, pearlash, maple goods for sugar and beer, and much better, stronger, lumber and firewood.

The early settlers who farmed were largely self-sufficing in their business. They kept a cow or two for butter, milk, cheese, beef, leather and some work. Sheep were raised as the main farm animal for wool and mutton because of their ability to make a living from poor food. Poultry, geese, turkeys, and pigs



Gordon Parker, son of Alberta and Charlie Parker, plows near the Jericho Meetinghouse and some of Jericho's first homes, including that of Philemon Hazen who was the local cider monger.

provided fresh meat and maple sugar furnished the main sugar supply. Very few things were bought, and they were such things as salt, flour and white sugar. The cash to buy these things was obtained by selling potash and pearlash and sometimes grain.

Around 1850, things began a gradual change towards commercial farming. Wheat, corn, and oats began to be raised more widely and some were sold. Other income was obtained from the sale of sheep, lambs, wool, and horses. Some fresh meat such as poultry and pork were sold as well as a very few dairy products.

Strawberries became a thriving business around 1885. This time also saw the beginning of corn ensilage cut and put into silos for winter feed. Cider was also a substantial part of the family life, a lot of which was sold. At this time, a farmer, or two or three farmers, would prepare a wagonload of produce to be taken to Boston, MA, and sold in the market at Faneuil Hall. Such a wagon would be loaded with fresh meat, eggs, fruit, vegetables, cider, and maple products. There was more than an even chance that on his return trip the farmer would have to fight off highwaymen to keep his money.

With the coming of the railroads around 1845, the farming industry took on a new turn. Grain was bought in larger amounts, and dairy cows, fresh milk

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and cream, and butter became the big cash crops. The selling of cordwood and lumber was also an important part of the farmers' income.

According to the "History of Windsor County," the Hazen family was the first to settle in Jericho. Tom Hazen left Lichfield, CT and built his farm on Christian Street in the town of Hartford. After the old man was settled, each of the six boys left with his sled and oxen and headed west. Three stopped and settled in Dothan, but the others didn't. Daniel, Elijah, and Philemon went on to Jericho and each built a farm there, probably the first in the valley. Elijah stopped at the present Robinson farm; Daniel built on what is now owned by Weston Cate; and Philemon built in the locality of Eugene Lyman's.

Daniel built his house and barn and cleared a little land in the spring and summer. In the fall, he returned to Lichfield, CT, and married Olive Bartholomew, sister of Luther. Their honeymoon trip was the journey back to Jericho to live at Daniel's farm. At the beginning of this trip Olive cut a willow sapling as a riding switch and upon reaching their destination planted the switch and lived to see her grandchildren playing in its boughs. The brush and remains of the willow's second offshoot can be seen today in the refuse pile at the rear of Weston Cate's privy.

Olive Hazen was known as a brave, fearless nurse. She helped deliver most of the babies born during her life near her home. She once went to the Center of the Town to help a sick woman. The story goes that she had to ford the White River just above its junction with the Connecticut River after the ice had broken in the spring. She tied herself to the horse's back, swam across and provided the necessary help.

Another early settler at the place of Jericho was Luther Bartholomew. He left Lichfield, Connecticut, in the winter and traveled north by ox sled. The family left Cornish, NH early in the morning, arrived at Hanover in the late afternoon and proceeded down to the river. As there was no bridge at the time, Luther obtained help and drove out to the edge of the ice. They then cut off a chunk of ice and poled across the river, landing at the mouth of Blood Brook in Norwich, and proceeded to Jericho that night. They built in the locale of Weston Cate Jr.'s and proceeded to build up a large, prosperous farm.

We often think that the present-day co-operatives are a fairly new idea, but are they? Mr. Tucker tells that on October 16, 1816, Philemon Hazen was chosen "Cider Monger" for the Jericho farmers. This meant that he was the head or superintendent of the local association

made up of twenty-three farmers, a position he held for many years. In the fall, he collected all the apples from the farmers, got the cider made in his mill, and distributed the cider according to the apples provided. He also sold the surplus and turned over any profits. In 1816, his mill made 288 barrels but by 1819 the total was 554 barrels. This made an average of 24 barrels to each member, or nine gallons per person who belonged to the association.

The population of Hartford rapidly increased after the Revolutionary War, presenting a school problem. In the beginning, schools were improvised where needed but in 1807 the town fathers met and divided the whole town into seventeen school districts. The district number of Jericho was seven. Schools were established in each district as needed or when the people felt inclined to do so.

The first school house in district number seven was there by the year 1814, even though provision for sanitation wasn't made until the year 1829 when a special privy was built. The school house was a brick building and stood fairly close to Edward Sprague's buildings. That old building was sold and torn down in 1849. It sold for twenty dollars.

In 1849 the new school house was built for a cost of \$563.42, the main amount of which was raised by the people within the district. This new building still stands as property of the Jericho Community Club.

Not until the year 1871 was the district significant enough to have a report in the Hartford Town Report. The highest attendance was about thirty-four pupils and in 1874 through 1876 it was about the most advanced school in town. Each pupil of his family was supposed to furnish enough wood for their own use during the winter and the rest was bought as needed and the cost spread over the families evenly.

The district had its own prudential committee and officers, and each year there was a school meeting to do the necessary business. The reports of these meetings were hand written in a small book from 1814 to 1874 which is now in the hands of Merton Nott. The school was always a place for community gatherings at holidays. The last class was held there in 1946, at which time I attended first grade.

The teachings and doctrines of Methodism were advocated in Hartford as far back as the early eighteen hundreds but not until the year 1845 were the people of this faith provided with a church home which was built in Jericho. One Eleazer Wells was known to have done Methodist preaching in the old brick school by the year 1841.



Noah B. Hazen was known around Hartford as Noah B. He was active in the town, church and schools.

Tucker reports that the first Methodist meeting house was built in Jericho in 1845 during the pastorate of F.T. Albee, who planned and assisted in building the house. The building committee included Noah Bartholomew, Truman Savage, and F.T. Albee. The cost of the plain, frame house was about a thousand dollars and it could seat about two hundred people. An average of twenty-five members attended services held regularly. Services

were maintained for a little longer than twenty years until death and emigration had so thinned the ranks as to render further efforts to maintain services apparently useless and so they were discontinued. The remaining members attended church elsewhere. In 1874, the meeting house was sold and removed to North Hartland, and the land was returned to the original owner, Noah Hazen.

Noah B. Hazen, known to all as "Noah B.," was the son of Daniel Hazen Jr. and grew up to be one of the most noted men in town. During his lifetime he ran the large home farm, dabbling in cotton manufacturing, lumber, and cord wood. He was the Sunday School Superintendent at the Hartford Congregationalist Church from 1875 to 1900 where he faithfully and most acceptedly filled the office. Upon resignation, he was presented a Bible, thirty-six carnations and was elected Superintendent Emeritus. He was also Superintendent of Schools in the Town of Hartford from 1871 to 1893.

Tucker says that the way one's intelligence was judged by others in this area was by which publications were read and how many of them. My great grandfather, Carlton Baxter Nott, was the first in Jericho to receive a regular paper which was the "Harper's Weekly." The story goes that he and his next neighbor to the north, one Mr. Hovey, enjoyed opposite political views and the latter subscribed to a "Gazette" which carried his ideas. Mr. Hovey would visit Carlton to gloat over an article in the "Gazette" but Mr. Nott would rebuff him with a "Harper's

Weekly" article. The standard procedure would then be that Mr. Hovey would become so angry that he would grab the other's paper, hurl it to the floor, spit on it several times and then jump up and down on it a while. Papers were passed up and down the road until everybody had read each one thoroughly.

The abruptness with which things were done is sometimes surprising. Leonard Hazen was the son of Nelson Hazen and took over the home farm. He had a hired housekeeper to help take care of his sickly mother. One day he was plowing above the house when the minister called so he went to the house at once. During the call the minister wed Leonard and the housekeeper, saving a special trip to town. Leonard then returned to plowing.

There was at one time a centrally located mailbox, so that whoever went to town picked up all the mail and placed it in the box on returning. This and many other things showed the spirit of co-operation which has always existed in Jericho, first as a necessity and later as a sign of friendship and sometimes a means of gaining profit. The first telephone lines were put up by the farmers themselves, each on his own land and signals were sent by beating on an old dishpan especially fixed for the purpose.

Transportation changed like everything else. Arthur Lyman bought the first car, which was a Buick, ever to be owned by a Jerichoian. In the spring of 1939, Merton Nott and Dewey Lyman bought the first tractors ever to be owned by members of the district. Other mechanization followed quickly as was needed to keep in the farming business.

To the best of my knowledge, the preceding is all true. All information from books has been accurately removed and carefully used. Many of the facts used have been obtained from the works of William Howard Tucker, a man whom many people thought to be somewhat of a liar, or sometimes think that he at least misrepresents the facts. This idea has been given to me from various books and other sources. I shall let the reader form his own opinions on this point.

The only thing I couldn't pinpoint to the exactness that I would have liked was the early dates of settlement in Jericho. Books didn't give them and people I talked with didn't know. Any further suggestions as to where I could find more data on the subject would be gratefully received.

This piece was written by Sherry Nott as a student at Hartford High School in 1957. It was provided by David Cate, son of Weston Cate who was an English teacher at the high school. It is used with Sherry Nott's permission.



Hazel Miller checking the oil on a truck in 1949. She once lost control of a tractor when she couldn't reach the pedals but her grandson prevented an accident.

potatoes and hundreds of pounds of butter in White River Junction.

In the early 1950s, Chester and Hazel bought a second farm that was nearby. After mowing hay one day, Hazel was helping Chester to fold up the cutter bar when they accidentally cut off the tip of her finger.

About that time, Chester would travel to Lansing, MI to go deer hunting with his cousins. One year, he was gone while they were raising turkeys and Hazel had to kill and dress fifty turkeys for Thanksgiving. When Chester returned, she told him that she wasn't dressing any more turkeys alone -- or he wasn't going deer hunting on her time.

My grandmother was extremely frugal. She kept notebooks every year with notations of every penny they earned and spent. She told me that some kids wouldn't pick up anything less than a dollar bill on the ground, but that she would crawl under a car if she saw a nickel there.

A neighbor told me that if someone on the hill was taking a calf to the East Thetford auction, they would check with their neighbors to maybe save them the trip. One neighbor asked Hazel to put her calf in a grain sack like a diaper to keep it from messing up his truck, but Hazel decided not to send her calf because the sack was worth ten cents.

Hazel had breast cancer in 1961 which resulted in a radical mastectomy. Unfazed, she continued to work with Chester milking the cows, washing milking machines and shoveling manure. Hazel helped with every chore on the farm that needed to be done.

When chores were done, Hazel and Chester enjoyed snowmobiling. They belonged to a snowmobile club and spent many hours riding with club members.

One time when Hazel was crossing a highway on her snowmobile, she was struck by a car and suffered a compound fracture of her leg. I remember coming upon the accident right after it happened. Hazel, a woman of nearly seventy, didn't cry a bit despite seeing a bone sticking out of her skin. This came after she had developed diabetes.

Into the 1980s, Hazel tried to convince Chester to sell their cows but she didn't get her wish until he had a bad accident in the woods. While cutting a tree, it kicked back unexpectedly and pinned him on the ground. At home on the porch, Hazel listened for his chainsaw and, when she didn't hear it, she went out and found him pinned under the tree.

After the Hartford fast squad rescued him, Chester spent several weeks in the hospital recovering from severe injuries. Their son Raymond finally convinced Chester to sell the cows and, during a very long winter, Hazel helped Chester regain his strength. The following summer, Chester and Hazel did their haying with help from my older brother Chester and myself.

Another memory I have of Hazel was when she was driving the tractor pulling a hay wagon on a very steep hill. The tractor started losing power and she couldn't hold the brakes and push the clutch to keep it from rolling backwards. I was riding on the drawbar of the wagon and was able to get up onto the tractor to push the brakes to stop us. Remember, this woman was in her seventies with legs that were really too short to be driving a tractor. It was something Chester expected of her, and she did it doggedly for many years.

Some thirty years after Hazel was first diagnosed with breast cancer, the cancer returned and spread into her bones. I believe this was harder on Chester than it was on Hazel who sat in a chair on the porch watching Chester continue to bale hay and cut firewood. In February, 1992, she passed away from a stroke that ended the pain of cancer.

Hazel's life was remarkable. She was born in a city, lost her father at a young age, and then joined a farm family in Hartford. She became a farm wife who could shoot a deer, skin a raccoon, make butter, boil maple syrup, dress a turkey, cook a holiday dinner, and dress like a lady. She could milk a cow, shovel manure, and tend to a child. She could drive a tractor or truck, feed the wood stove, and do anything else that needed to be done. People have no idea what women went through in the time of Hazel Miller.

order, the Rural Electrification Administration of 1936 provided loans to wire up rural areas. The money had to be paid back, but the REA loaned money all over the U.S. In Vermont, small co-ops sprang up, requiring a minimum of three customers per mile. However, some people in rural areas were skeptical, arguing that the old methods were working. So, when the REA representatives gave their spiels, they made sure that women were present to learn how their lives could be made so much easier with electricity to take some of the burden off their shoulders. That sealed the deal with the REA!

Vermont Senator George Aiken urged the process forward. With federal funding after the 1928 flood, dams were built to control floods and to generate power. The task to wire up Vermont was underway, with Victory, Vermont, becoming the last town to receive power in 1956.

Lempster, New Hampshire, saw its first utility pole erected in December of 1939, and it was a huge cause for celebration. Residents reported that they danced, screamed and pulled on all the lights (they were operated by suspended chains). One man, finding an

electric toaster under the Christmas tree, was inspired to write a 25-stanza poem. An elderly woman moved her rocking chair under the ceiling light and stayed up all night to bask in its glow.

The benefits were enormous. Agricultural productivity was greatly increased, human lifespans and health were improved as indoor plumbing replaced outdoor privies, refrigeration allowed families to enjoy ice cream and frozen foods, food safety increased, electric stoves spared women from cooking with woodstoves, milking machines replaced hand milking, gutter cleaning was transformed, barn fires dropped dramatically, and (Steve added with a chuckle) electric milk coolers provided a handy means for farmers to stash their bottles of beer.

Closer to home, Dewey's mansion was the first in the Town of Hartford to be electrified through the use of a generator during the early 1880s.

Steve drew an interesting parallel between the advent of electrification and our current attempts to spread the availability of broadband to hook people up with reliable, high-speed internet. During COVID, he noted, students without access to broadband were left behind in their schoolwork.

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THANK YOU!

Yesterday's News

Don't Bet on it, *The Otta-Quechee Post*, January 19, 1872

David R. Dickey of Randolph, recently bet that he could eat four bottles of brandy peaches and drink the liquor with two tumblers of raw whiskey. He dropped dead while holding the last peach in his mouth.

Loves His Plants, *The Landmark*, February 16, 1884

Rand and wife have gone to St. Albans for a few days. He pays a man \$8.00 to take care of 40 cents worth of plants while they are away.

Rightly So, *Spirit of the Age*, June 9, 1875

At a recent spelling match, one man spelt it "pasnip" and got beet.

Road Hogs, *Spirit of the Age*, January 15, 1879

During the month of December 1878, about 26,400 hogs came over the Central Road in White River Junction.

Hold Your Horses, *The Landmark*, December 4, 1886

Any man who will swindle one out of 75 cents clear cash, and he guileless innocence as John J. Simonds, attorney at law at White River Junction, ought to be skinned alive. Yet this was done the other day in broad daylight, right in front of Gibbs' livery stable. John hired a team and went out a few miles from this emporium of fashion and intellect. Returning all sound and sober with the team someone stepped up to unharness it as though he had a right to, and John asked big as life, "what's to pay for this prancing equine?" "Seventy-five cents," came prompt and clear. The cash was paid into the hands of the servile minion and our attorney (which means lawyer) departed for the Junction House. Well, to reduce this tragedy to a "roaring farce" in a few words, the man who came to take charge of the team was a stranger, or maybe a tramp, standing around seeking whom he might devour, and he lit upon Simonds as above, who has since had to disgorge again to the regular authorities of the stable. John has hired one of our rooms for an office after the first of January, and we want him to pay the rent to us and not to any loafer he happens to see in the street.

Guided Tours, *The Landmark*, April 1, 1882

Come in and see our office. We have a nice one: Splendid Whitlock press, a new 4 1/2 horsepower Bookwalter engine, and everything to match, except a subscription list. Drop in and see us while we are agreeable. Quick!

Practical, *The Landmark*, April 22, 1882

Bishop Niles preached one of the best, most practical Christian sermons it has been our good fortune to hear. He is a very easy speaker, while his discourse was remarkable for the absence of all ornate imagery and superfluous garniture, but was so plain that the most uneducated could comprehend it in its entirety. Would that the world might have more sermons like it. The practical is what is needed. Give theory to the dogs.

Impractical, *The Landmark*, April 15, 1882

Rev. D.D. Hartzell, D.D., conducted services at the Episcopal Church last Sunday. He has quite a vivid imagination.

Top Drawer Decor, *The Landmark*, April 15, 1882

We have an awful time to start housekeeping. Our furniture comes a pound at a time. That is always the way when one goes into the super extra. The next time we shall fill it with such cheap stuff as Safford and Gates have in their houses.

Good Knight, *The Landmark*, November 22, 1889

Gen. Rush Hawkins, who is quite well known here, has received the decoration of Knighthood from the French government. the question in our mind is, how can a republic confer such a title?

Hartford Historical Society

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HHS Calendar

THE GARIPAY HOUSE MUSEUM will be open Friday mornings, 9:30-11:30 a.m. in June, July, August, and September, or by appointment. Please call 802/296-3132 or email us at info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.org. Phones/email are checked twice a week.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS are open to the public on the second Monday of the month at the Garipay House at 6 p.m. (Please check for exact date.)

Wednesday, April 9, 2025 - "The Navy and the Marines in the Revolutionary War," presented by Leo Tucker. 7:00 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ; 1721 Maple St., Hartford Village. Free and accessible.

The **Genealogy Center** on the second floor of the Hartford Library is open Fridays from 3-6 p.m. and by appointment. Please call Carole Haehnel at 802/295-3974 or email her at: chaehnel151@comcast.net. Interested in helping residents explore their family histories? Please contact us at info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com.

Websites

Hartford Historical Society: <http://www.hartfordvthistory.com/>

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