



# Hartford Historical Society

The Garipay House • 1461 Maple Street

Hartford Village, Vermont 05047

[www.hartfordhistory.org](http://www.hartfordhistory.org)

HARTFORD • QUECHEE • WEST HARTFORD • WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER

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SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July-August 2006

## Quechee Through the Eyes of David Briggs

*The following is a part of his Oral History Project  
Interview with minor spelling & grammar corrections  
by the editor.*

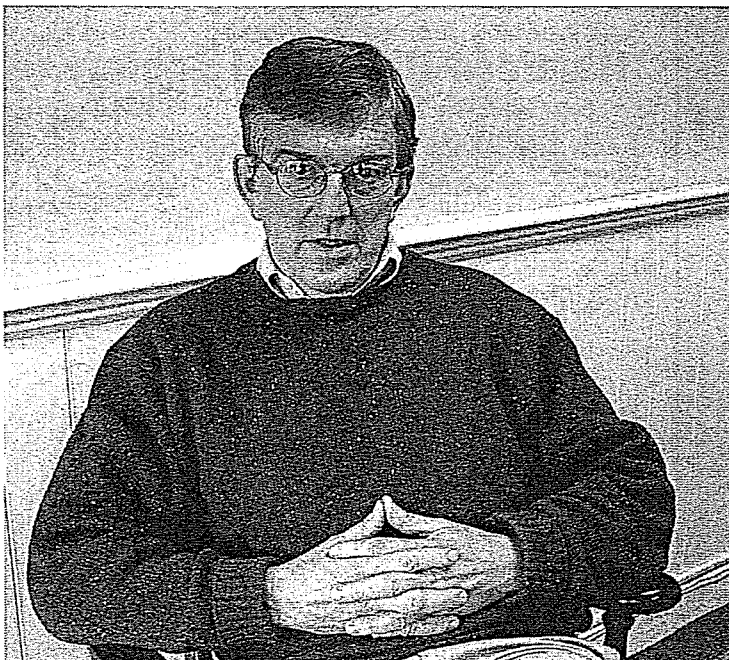
Well, I feel very close to the Quechee thing because ironically when I came back there to work in 1972 as a professional engineer I was coming back to a place where I had really worked.

The first work experience I ever had in my life was exactly ten years earlier in the summer of '62 when I was fifteen years old. My father had, I like to say, exiled me to Quechee because, he says, "You're fifteen now, it's time for you to learn how to work." Although he had been born in White River Junction

he spent the last ten years of his growing up years in Thetford as my grandfather relocated the family out of White River to a family farm in Thetford.

He felt that farming was absolutely the best way to teach a young person the realities of work and life, so he found a farmer by the name Merrill Henderson high on a hill outside Quechee when Quechee was nothing but family farms. In the summer of '62 there were some ten bona fide classic family farms in Quechee all making their livelihood from farm activity and almost all of 'em had herd sizes around fifty milk cows. The Quechee Fells Farm which is today the centerpiece of the Quechee Lakes Clubhouse probably had seventy-five cows and they had a hundred thousand chickens literally. It was probably the biggest farm in Hartford at that time. So he took me out there and he said, "I'll be back to get you in the fall."

I say that with tongue in cheek because Quechee today is like just an errand, it's six miles away so we go there and come back two times before lunch, but in '62 even with cars being prevalent people didn't move around that way, those farmers in Quechee might come to White River once a week to do serious business - like go to the bank or the feed store, check up on something or go to the doctor. They would come to White River Junction on Friday night to do their shopping but they didn't leave the farm for much other than that. So when I went to Quechee I think I came home that summer maybe three times - today you probably wouldn't





even put a kid out there, you'd drive him out every morning like a soccer mom would do.

My pay was what the farmer wanted to offer me, for a workday was: you woke, you got to the barn at 5:00 in the morning, you were done milking by six at night, plus all the haying and chores that went in between, so it was thirteen hours a day less those wonderful home cooked meals that you got and that was six days a week. Saturday was not off and every other Sunday was completely off, but the odd Sunday you had to get up and do the milking from five to eight and then three to six so on an off day it was still six hours worth of milking. For that he wanted to offer me \$15.00 a week plus room and board. My father said I was worth twenty and the farmer couldn't deny that so I got twenty bucks. So you know what did I work, maybe eight weeks \$160.00 plus room and board. So that was a pretty phenomenal experience.

When I got out of the service I was back in Quechee and by that time the Quechee vision created by John Davidson was five thousand acres of land, 2,500 residential elements, 2,000 home sites and 500 condominiums. He was very proud about the fact that he was only going to put 2,500 units on

five thousand acres and that there would therefore be a lot of greenbelt property to preserve the nature of Quechee. The other thing of course is by the time he had bought all that land there was only one farm left out of the ten - the Maxham Farm down on the road towards Taftsville - , all the other farms had been bought out. Ironically the farm that I worked for, the Henderson Farm was sold to somebody else, not Quechee Lakes and the farmer had moved back into White River Junction.

Quechee was making that transition from classic "oh, geees it was just a wonderful summer" - it's a 'Gone With The Wind' kind of image of being there in true farm country - to a second home development. It was envisioned that it be done well, that it have a very enthusiastic sense of the past of the place and I was a big advocate for it retaining some of its agricultural character. They talked about taking that one farm which was the Maxham Farm and making it a showcase farm with real animals and all that.

I think probably that was the only real disappointment of Quechee Lakes that they didn't do that given that family farms in an area like the Upper Valley were going away. Harold Eastman's Quechee Fells Farm became the centerpiece of its golf course and country club. Mel Fogg's barn on the Main Street of Quechee where he literally had cows on



## Hartford Historical Society

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### Newsletter Editor:

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Main Street and grazing on what is now the cute little village green became an office and apartment building. The Dupuis Farm on the side of Dupuis Hill could have been the showplace farm but didn't somehow make it, the concept of having a showplace farm maybe not quite so posh as the Billings Farm but still a good hard example to everyone there would have been a big benefit to Quechee but it just didn't happen. They had an opportunity there to have a transition from either the Dupuis or Maxham family to carry on their farming and make it more and more of a demonstrator kind of piece but, that just wasn't there for some reason or another - it didn't happen, but there was a high concern for high quality. The design has proven to be very good.

Quechee Lakes has brought a lot of very fine citizens to the town. If you go back to the concern that I talked about in my case the village of White River Junction losing its citizen leaders, now we're thinking more beyond the village limits to the township as a whole so it has worked out that people who live in Quechee embrace the whole town, they don't just stay on the island in Quechee. They really do look at Hartford as a whole so they'll run for the select board, they'll serve on commissions and, and committees. They will give philanthropically to things like River City Arts, Northern Stage, the New England Transportation Institute and Museum and other things and so they bring culture, they bring intelligence and they bring financial resources to the community at large. So that's a very big benefit.

The more pragmatic reality is that many of them don't have children so they're not, in this first integration of Quechee Lakes which is going to, before you know it, be a fifty year experience, they haven't brought a lot of kids to the formula that would challenge the school population. So it's been a very positive thing. The Harris Emory Mills shut down in the early 50s, the Dewey's Mills shut down in '62, but for Quechee Lakes I don't know that Simon Pearce for example would be there.



Certainly Simon Pearce did an extraordinary thing by retrofitting that mill and preserving its ability to create waterpower into the form of hydroelectric power. So the list goes on and on of the positive things that Quechee Lakes has brought to the community.

It's been a little trying at times from a sociological standpoint because in the effort to confirm that Quechee was going to stand for quality, the efforts to make that really clear have positioned people socially more with their neighbors in Hanover or Woodstock because they would be from that same socioeconomic stripe, which has caused a little friction but that's largely dampened out and I don't think that it's a big problem. The elitism hasn't really been the problem that it could have been. So Quechee has been a success story but that's the thought I was going to convey - there was a time when a lot of people around the State (and there may still be a good number of them) didn't even know that Quechee was part of Hartford because Quechee wasn't anxious to share the fact that they might be lined up with White River Junction as White River Junction was the primary mercantile commercial center. That leading retail center in the '50s and early '60s had atrophied to where it was none of that and was now becoming depressed and even pretty tattered and so White River took on the unfortunate role of being "the wrong side of the tracks" which was ironic and a difficult stigma to shed.

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# Letter from the Village

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## The Mystery of M.L.

By Art Peale

Tucked away in a wooded area next to a field where horses roam is an old cemetery. Discovered by some hikers back in the 50's and named Potter's Field, it has remained pretty well unknown.

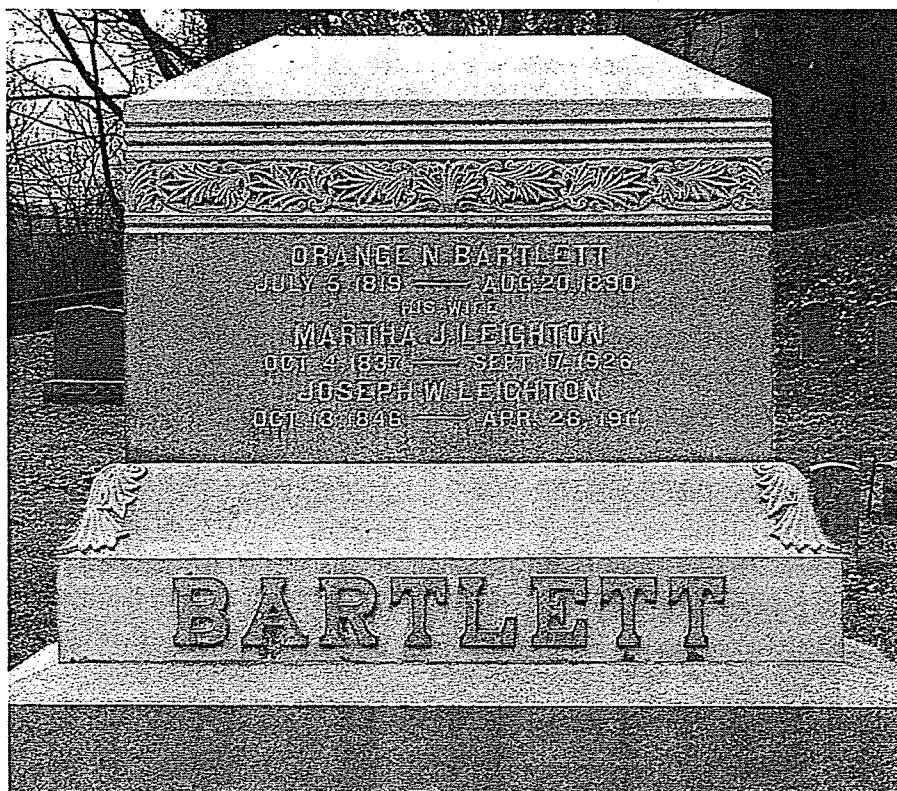
I discovered it by chance when looking through some records one day, and coming upon the news article telling about the discovery. Since I have a great interest in any, but especially old cemeteries, and the way they are often neglected and abused in many ways, I decided to do some research into its background and name. I just believe that those buried there are due more respect than what they get.

This cemetery is especially interesting because most of the markers are just field stones. I had never seen this before except in the old Ranger Rd. cemetery, but in this case there was at least one stone not buried by a hundred years of decaying leaves. It was not an imposing monument, being made of slate and only about 6-inches wide, but the initials M.L. set my mind to wondering. Who might this person be amongst all these field stones?

My search began by looking through property transfer records as an old map showed a house in the 1800's owned by an I.T. & J. W. Leighton. Sure enough, back in 1908 a Joseph and Mary Leighton sold the property and the old deeds reflected the property was once part of a 100 acre farm.

I decided to go back further and see how long the Leightons owned the property. In 1863 the property was transferred from a Hamilton to a Boyd and 30 acres sold to a B. Dimick. Sure enough the name is also on the old map in the same area.

Then in January 1868 it was transferred from



Boyd to Brothers and again later in 1868 from Brothers to J.L. M.D. and Isaac Leighton.

I wanted to find out more about the Leightons and many years of censuses told me some. In 1850 the census showed:

Leighton, Isaac (42) farmer  
Jemima (47)  
John (18)  
Benjamin (17)  
Ellen (14)  
Martha (12)  
Henry (11)  
Edwin (9)  
Joseph (3)

The 1850 census also showed a Lamphire:

Henry (26) farmer  
Olivia (24)  
Helen (3)

And 8 names with the note "paupers in poorhouse". But, no M.L.

*Continued Next Page*

In May 1872 Isaac and Sarah Leighton transferred the property to Joseph and Mary Leighton, the elder Leightons being in their late 60's. And then once again in 1908 a transfer was made by Joseph and Mary Leighton to Riley. So there's an M.L.

Back to the drawing board and a check of census records shows no Mary in 1870 when Joseph was 23. In 1880 Joseph was 33 and living with his stepmother Sarah, and listed as single. Though he could have been a widower. So, Jemima must have passed away and Isaac remarried and subsequently passed away. (1878).

The 1900 census shows Joseph age 58 and single once again. Also a Martha Bartlett. And in 1910 we see Joseph age 65 as a widower. What happened to Mary?

Cemetery records. All these people have to be buried someplace, don't they? A check of cemetery records reflects burial in the Old Hartford Cemetery on Maple St. Right away I find the stone. A large imposing stone on a large lot. There's Isaac, Jemima, Sarah, and Joseph. Also Martha and her husband and brothers Benjamin and Henry. No Mary. Joseph's death certificate and burial certificate both show him as being a "widower".

Unfortunately the 1890 census was destroyed by fire. But the mystery remains. What happened to Mary? And who is buried under the M.L. stone?



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## Curator's Corner

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Here is a list of some of the wonderful donations we received in 2006, some of which are on display at the Garipay House:

- 1947 Commencement exercises program with 'name card - Esther Ruth Brown' /envelope
- 1943 Quechee school graduation invitation with 'name card - Esther Brown'
- Quechee church history "... 1831-1966" By Alice S. Farrington and Mae Jemery - 1966
- Hartford High School 52nd Commencement Exercises June 12, 1947
- Sykes Avenue Post Office open house may 15, 1983 - Harold Wright, Postmaster
- Inaugurating the U.S. Postal Service - July 1, 1971 - first day issue sent to Max Church
- Sykes Avenue Post Office - envelope/blue photo of building + 20 cent stamp may 15, 1983
- Tinkham, Scott - business post card addressed to S.T., Quechee, VT/painting of A. Lincoln - 1909
- Interstate cloverleaf from above - in autumn
- Ottaquechee River - high water & ice ca. 1976
- Theron Boyd standing in a meadow - colored snapshot - 1984
- Theron Boyd standing in a meadow - colored snapshot - 1984
- Printing blocks from various White River Junction businesses, etc.
- Photographs of Hartford Mill workers and other scenes in Hartford Village
- United States Postal Service msc White River Junction T-shirt - 1983
- Hartford Woolen Co. Building/central VT railway - blueprint showing leased land august 27, 1917
- Sketches of Hartford Village - ink & water - by unknown artist - in one frame
- Life of Ephraim Morris and other articles by or about Kate Morris cone
- Cone family photo - taken outdoors
- Hartford Woolen Co. Inc - various documents
- Hartford high field hockey jacket
- Stonecrest Farm & Christian Street - photograph [16" x 20"] by Curtiss Flying Service ca. 1930
- Polka Dot/White River Junction T-shirt - "White River Junction - it isn't so bad" & sketch of Polka Dot - J. Cintron - 2005
- Album of photographs - mostly of the 1927 flood in Hartford
- Several photographs & postcards including views of the Universalist Church and loggers under the Wilder Bridge
- Box of cards & letters re: Dr. Worthen's death
- Professional Camera Ltd. - photo finishing envelopes [unused] printed by E. Kodak Co.



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## From the Chairman

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By Clyde Berry, *HHS Board Chairman*  
chairman@hartfordhistory.org

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If you missed the Discover Historic Hartford Day on June 3rd you missed an opportunity to visit some of the historic buildings in Hartford. It was my first chance to visit the West Hartford Church, what a great job they are doing in restoring it. When the Stained Glass windows are repaired it will add so much to the beauty of the sanctuary.

The Theron-Boyd House is a beauty. What a lot of history these homes have. The restored stage curtain, from Cascadnac Grange, at the Wilder Clubhouse was down for viewing. The beautifully maintained Hartford Village Library with the great woodwork and beautiful floors was open also. Even though it rained there were guides at the Christian Street Cemetery and Center of Town. Lots of great stories at the Jericho Schoolhouse.

We want to thank the different groups for opening their buildings for the tour and also a big

thank you to all the volunteers who manned the different buildings and sites. It was a great day and we will try it again with hopes that the weather will cooperate better next time.

Remember you don't have to be on the Board of Directors to man the Garipay House for the two open house days. We welcome volunteers. Maybe someone would volunteer to make goodies for our special meetings, only three or four times a year? If anyone would like to be on the Board of Directors let one of us know and we will suggest your name to the nominating committee.

Clyde Berry  
Chairman of the Board



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## Historical Trivia

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### The Quechee Name

Unknown Source - possibly *The Landmark* - 1959

"THAT QUERY about where the word Ottauquechee comes from has stirred a couple of readers to investigate and write in.

Mrs. Ralph Sumner of Wilder quotes from Woodstock history:

"Capt. Rogers who commanded the expedition against the St. Francis Indians in 1759 called Quechee Falls 'Wattock Quitchey Falls' other names 'Wasserquechee'. In land records of Woodstock it is called 'Waterquechee'. (Note how Quechee is spelled sometimes 'Que-' and other times 'Quee-'. In another book it is called OttaQuechee. It is called a river of many 'aliases.' Hope someone comes up with more information."

Someone did. Mrs. Jessie Peoples of North Hartland writes:

"In reply to the question about the meaning of

the name Ottauquechee I don't think anyone knows but there have been some educated guesses. John C. Huden in the Vermont History quarterly of July 1955, gives some meanings based on a study of Indian languages. They are 'current coming out', 'cat-tails near current', 'place where land near muskrat ledges trembles', 'at the place of wild dashing stream', 'rapids', 'rapid current', and 'tumbling stream'.

"I have also been told it means 'winding stream'.

'I rather favor the 'rapids' or 'tumbling stream' as there must have been some beautiful tumbling water here near the mouth as well as upstream.'

So that's the way the thing sits now. But much easier it would have been to us historians if the Indians could have been less pretentious with their nomenclature."

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# Your Society at Work

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## Oral History Project Report

By Pat Stark, Hartford Historic Preservation Commission

It continues to be a pleasure to coordinate this project for the Hartford Historical Society and the Preservation Commission. Thanks to our many volunteers and hired interviewers we now have — interviews transcribed and ready to be used! David Briggs article is just a small sample from these interviews. If you know of anyone interested in being interviewed (or volunteering to interview) for this project please let me know! Thanks.

## Discover Historic Hartford

The 24 or so hardy folks who braved the cold & wet June 3rd had a rewarding experience visiting the 8 sites on the tour. Of special interest were the tours of the Theron Boyd House in Quechee and the Jericho Schoolhouse where the Millers and Norm Lyman related tales of growing up in the Jericho District. The Zacharski's did a great job of hosting this site by providing photographs, donut holes and beverages!

Special THANKS go to all the volunteers who made this event possible: Eileen Samor & Gwen Tuson at Christian Street Cemetery, Randy Dickson at Center of Town, Jim & Stanley Kenison at the West Hartford Church & Cemetery, David Ford at the old Firehouse, John Dumville from the Vermont Historic Preservation Division and Art Peale at the Theron Boyd House, Pat & Leo Zacharski at the Jericho Schoolhouse, Roy Black and Patt & Bob Taylor at the Wilder Club, Dot Jones at the Hartford

Library, Lorna Ricard and Donna Scobey at more than one site!

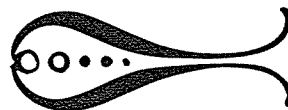
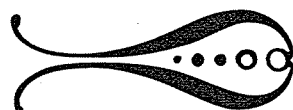
Informal feedback indicates this event should be repeated — so look for it again in 2007 (perhaps in the Fall) — with some new sites!

It is too soon to report on the winners of the raffle of all folks to complete the passport to all sites, but special thanks go to Northlight Digital for donating a Collamer Abbott print as one of the prizes. Others are one of the last new copies of St. Croix's book and an 'American Girl' type doll.

## Call for Donations

We are MISSING the following issues of the QUECHEE TIMES. If anyone has any of these issues they could part with - we would love to complete our collection! Thank you.

- 1975 - V3 #3
- 1978 - V5 #6
- 1980 - ALL
- 1987 - SUMMER
- 1988 - ALL
- 1989 - ALL
- 1990 - ALL
- 1991 - SPRING/SUMMER
- 1992 - ALL
- 1993 - ALL
- 1994 - ALL
- 1995 - ALL
- 1996 - ALL
- 1997 - VXXXV #1, #3, + #4
- 1998 - ALL
- 1999 - V1 #3
- 2000 - VXXVIII #3

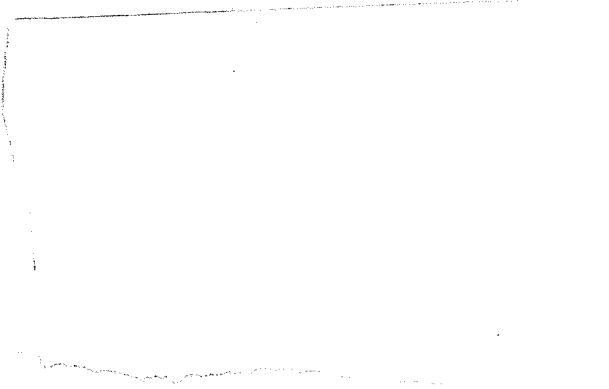


# Hartford Historical Society

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## HHS Calendar

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*Programs are held at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ on Maple Street in Hartford at 7:00 p.m. and are followed by refreshments.*

Wed., June 21, 2006 – We will have a booth at the Wednesday Band Concert at Lyman Point – come see OUR Band photos!

Sat. & Sun., June 24–25, 2006 – Annual History Expo at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds. We are featuring the Transformation of Quechee.

Tues., July 25, 2006 – HHS Board Meeting — Garipay House, , 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, VT., 7:00 p.m.

Tues., August 22, 2006 – HHS Board Meeting — Garipay House, , 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, VT., 7:00 p.m.

Sat., September 9, 2006 – Glory Days of the Railroad by the White River Junction train station.

Tues., September 13, 2006 – **Program** – Sprightly Steps: Vermont's Contra and Square Dancing Tradition. Early settlers may have frowned upon the merriment of dancing, but people of all backgrounds fell under the spell of the fiddle. Presented by Adam Boyce.

Tues., September 26, 2006 – HHS Board Meeting — Garipay House, , 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, VT., 7:00 p.m.

Tues., October 24, 2006 – HHS Board Meeting — Garipay House, , 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, VT., 7:00 p.m.

Wed., November 8, 2006 – **Program** – A Hard Founding Father to Love: Ira Allen of Vermont – Land speculator, revolutionary and government leader, Ira Allen was a significant figure in 18th Century Vermont. Kevin Graffagnino examines Ira's checkered career.

Tues., November 28, 2006 – HHS Board Meeting — Garipay House, , 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, VT., 7:00 p.m.

Wed., April 11, 2007 – **Program** – The St. Alban's Raid – Kevin Graffagnino will give a lively description of the only Civil War battle that was fought in Vermont.

Wed., June 13, 2007 – **Program** – The Transformation of Quechee – From a sleepy little village to a beautiful and vibrant community, Quechee has undergone an incredible transformation since the 1960's. Presented by John Lutz