

Hartford Historical Society

The Garipay House • 1461 Maple Street
Hartford Village, Vermont 05047

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

Volume 20, Number 5

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May - June 2008

A Page From the History of Hartford

By Kate M. Cone

Originally Published in "The Old and the New", Volume 1

Annual Business Meeting and June Program: White River's Twin- State Airport

*Wed., June 11th - 7:00 pm
Greater Hartford United
Church of Christ*

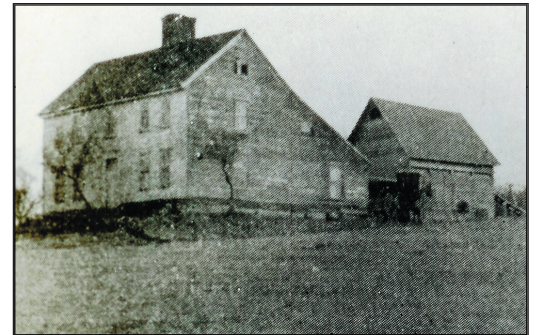
The Society's annual business meeting and election will be held on Wednesday, June 11th. Several board positions are vacant at this time and nominations will be presented and accepted from the floor. Following will be a powerpoint presentation on the history of the Twin-State Airport.

There will be a question/answer period and refreshments will be served following the program.

Please join us for a wonderful evening!

Samuel Adams Drake, the Boston antiquarian, calls a graveyard "a collection of scattered pages whereon we read the history of the times." A chapter in the early history of Hartford can so be pieced together from two old stones which stand in the burying ground at the Center of the Town. One is the next oldest stone there. It reads as follows:

In Memory of Mrs
Judith ye amiable Con
sort of ye Rev'd Thoms
Grofs who Departed
this life in hope of a Gl-
orious Immortality
June 28 1790 AEtatis
Suae 27. Here deaths
Cold fetters hath Con
Fin'd within This Grave
a Mother kind Alfo a true
& loving wife who at
Gods Call Refigned her life.
Negue ulla ertant Magno
aut parvo Lethe fuga.



*Home of Rev. Thomas Gross, First
Settled Minister in Hartford*

So young, - so long ago, - the minister's wife, and leaving a baby behind her, - these were the immediate considerations which touched me. The spot is one of the most beautiful in town, a high upland on the west slope of Hurracaine. Far below winds the White river. Southward through the gap in Shallies hill can be seen the Ottaquechee valley. The summit of Hurracaine rises on the east and, all around, the hills, "like sleeping kings," lie far and blue. So it looked on the summer day when first I read Judith Gross's epitaph, and so it looked, if any one had eyes to see it, on the summer day one hundred and nine years ago when they laid this young wife and mother to rest there. Perhaps her dying eyes beheld the beauty on the June day when she died. From those western hills she may have thought

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*Entryway to Center of Town Cemetery
Courtesy of Arthur Peale*

to see reflected the splendor of the Resurrection morn. She had been a bride in the wilderness, she had felt the pang of motherhood, and the yet sharper pang of leaving her child motherless - she had need to be comforted by the hope of a Glorious Immortality! Did her husband preach her funeral sermon? He surely stood where I stood and saw her laid away, and afterwards, in his solitary study wrote the lines which, still clear and plain, narrate her sad little story, - whence, otherwise, the Latin? Alas that it should be the Latin that it is! I have given it above as it looked to me after two examinations, the second time with a witness. Tucker in his History of Hartford, makes it yet more impossible -- *Negue ulla ertant magro aut parva lethe fuga*. After puzzling in vain for its meaning, I applied to Professor Lord at Hanover. He suggests that Mr. Gross had in mind the line of Horace, *neque ulla est aut magno aut parvo leti fuga*, "nor has great or small escape from death." The line occurs in that Satire in which the fable of the town and country mouse is told and is part of the argument which the city mouse uses to induce the country mouse to leave his home. But *leti* means annihilation. That would never do for a daughter of the Puritans: her husband put in its place *Lethe*- "forgetfulness" or the "River of Death." As for the second word, *ertant*, there is no such Latin word. Perhaps the stone-cutter was to blame for that and Mr. Gross may have been as much disturbed by it as we are. But what an incongruous association in the good man's mind which brought together his dead young wife and the old pagan poet's mice! She was indeed a country mouse, but surely she did not deserve to lie all these years under a cynic's Latin, mangled at that.

The Rev. Thomas Gross graduated from Dartmouth College in 1785 at the age of twenty-five and became the first settled minister of the town of Hartford the following year. He lived at the Center of the Town - for some reason that name

has never been abbreviated - and preached in the church, afterwards the Town House, which stood hard by the cemetery of which we have been speaking.

Sometime early in the history of the town the Fathers had the center of the township accurately ascertained and ordered a church erected there, the first church in Hartford. It was built by town money and till 1805 the minister was paid out of the town treasury. The site is still marked by a square of bits of plaster and the building itself was standing a few years ago - a plain, unpainted structure, without a steeple, a door on the east front, and three or four windows on each side.

The church originally had a gallery running round three sides. There were two stories of windows and two doors one on the south side and one on the east end. The pulpit was opposite the door, on the north side - a high pulpit approached by two flights of narrow steps. There was a sounding board hung by a rod from the ceiling. There was neither steeple nor chimney. In 1848 the building was cut down several feet, the galleries removed, the south door closed up and an entry and chimney added. The carpenters who made these alterations are still living - Ervin and Asa Russ.

No building was richer in associations of the early religious and civil history of the town. For many years from the four quarters of the township here gathered the Sunday congregation, fording or ferrying the rivers in the earliest days, climbing the long steep hills by which from all directions the place is approached, getting warmed and fed at noon-

(Continued . . .)



Hartford Historical Society

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<http://www.hartfordhistory.org>

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James Kenison, Vice President	802 738-5333
David Ford, Secretary	802 356-2776
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time at Freegrace Leavitt's tavern close by, and listening for at least twenty years to two sermons every Sunday by the Rev. Thomas Gross. In 1791 the population of the town numbered 988 and the custom of the time required that a good proportion of the number be present at church. Here was renewed the Puritan Sabbath a century and a half after its installation in Massachusetts, the great-grandsons of the Puritans being under nearly the same conditions, minus the Indians, in the newly settled Vermont, as their forefathers had been in the newly settled Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Another procession beside the Sunday one we must imagine whenever a death occurred. Over the Woodstock road past Parson Gross's or over Hurracaine past the Wright's many a bier was borne by toiling men, stopping now and then to rest and be relieved by other bearers. Seven members of a family named Rider, dying one after another of consumption were so carried over Hurracaine from the Russtown district.

The church may always have been used for town-meeting - its better name is meeting-house - and the associations of its later history are altogether of town-meeting. Thither on the first Tuesday in March - and the time is of itself a relic of an antiquity older than English history - in boisterous, muddy, snowy weather the voting population of Hartford went on an annual pilgrimage. A typical New England town-meeting, that was what the English historian Freeman, on coming to America, most wished to see. Our old Town House could have shown him many a one. Town-meetings were held there as late as 1872. The Town Clerk's office was at the Center of the Town until 1840.

But to return to the cemetery. Judith Gross was often in my mind all summer. I went again to her grave in autumn and then discovered what other visitors have doubtless found out at first sight, that another chapter may be added to the story. The Rev. Thomas Gross married again and the two wives lie buried side by side with only space for one grave between them. The second gravestone reads:

In memory of Mrs.
Rhoda the amiable
Consort of the Rev'd
Thomas Grofs who departed this life august,
7th, 1805. AEtatis suae 51.
In hope of a better She
Cheerfully left the
present world -
Cur lugemus amicos seperatos morte. In Caelo est pax.



Freegrace Leavitt Tavern, Center of Town

This was Thomas Gross's autumn wife, a mature woman thirty-six years old when the young summer wife died, just the person, doubtless, to take charge of baby Thomas and six years older than the minister himself. Experienced and capable we think of her as bringing order and comfort to the forlorn parsonage.

From Tucker and Childs several facts are to be gleaned about her personal history. She was a daughter of Joseph Marsh of Hartford, first lieutenant-governor of the State of Vermont and a man of much influence and importance in the early history of the state. She was born in Lebanon, Connecticut. Her first husband was Thomas White Pitkin who owned saw and grist mills in Quechee and who was drowned in the Ottaquechee river in May, 1787, on the going out of his dam. (This is from the Pitkin Genealogy which gives the singular spelling Ottor Queechy.) By him she had six children, four certainly of whom lived to grow up. The eldest, Thomas White Pitkin, 2nd, lived in the large brick house opposite the Town House and was Mrs. Ora Wood's father. Of the younger children one at least, Lucy, must have gone to the parsonage to live. Two sons, Pitkin and Horace Gross, were born of the second marriage.

The minister's lot was No. 16 at the Center of the Town and contained one hundred acres. Tucker speaks of the farm, as being owned and occupied in 1889 by Frank McCarthy. It is now in the hands of Thomas Fitzmorris, and comprises one hundred and sixty acres, sixty acres of woodland having been added to the original plot. The house which Priest Gross built and lived in is still standing, a typical colonial structure, with a rear roof sloping to within ten feet of the ground and a central chimney with fireplaces and a brick oven for its warm heart. It faces west and stands a hundred yards or so back from the road, thirty-five rods northeast of the group of houses which surround the site of the first church. From it the graveyard is visible, and the view of the White river and the Pomfret hills is very fine.

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There we may picture to ourselves the busy life Mrs. Rhoda led. Many must have been the cares of the mistress of this household of three sets of children, - mother to the big boys and girls of the surname of Pitkin, mother to poor Judith's son, and mother to the two little fellows, one of whom united in his name the name of both husbands. Reading her epitaph one speculates as to its truth. "Cheerfully she left the present world" - that may really mean that she was tired and glad to go, was willing to escape old age: - "*Cur lugemus amicos seperatos morte. In Caelo est pax.*" - nothing ails that Latin; it readily means "Why do we mourn friends taken from us in death? In Heaven is peace." Does that covertly express her husband's sentiments? Was there peace also at the parsonage? Something of her character may be guessed from her forbears which, on both sides - her mother was a Connecticut Mason, - were of the best, and from her children. Both sons of the second marriage followed professions, Pitkin Gross becoming a doctor and Horace studying law, whereas

Judith's son, Thomas Gross, Jr., became a clerk in Wells' store at Hartford village and then disappears from history.

Soon after Mrs. Rhoda's death her husband also disappears from the history of Hartford. Two months before she died a meeting, of which her father, the Hon. Joseph Marsh, was moderator was held to form a religious society, the occasion being "the broken situation of the inhabitants with respect to religious order." That little or no criticism of Mr. Gross's efficiency is to be inferred therefrom may be judged by the fact that in October, 1807, he preached the election sermon before the Legislature at Woodstock. In March, 1808, he sold his house and farm to Bani Udall and removed to Batavia, New York. There he died thirty-nine years later. What his fortunes were in that, for the time, remote region, whether he married and lost again, wrote another Latin epitaph and was laid to rest at last beside a third wife, we can only fancy. His house and the headstones of his two wives' graves are the tangible memorials of his life in Hartford.

News and Notes

White River School 100th Year Celebration Continues

The celebration of the 100th year of education on Pine Street by the White River School community is moving toward a birthday party on June 5, 2008. Activities include classroom interviews with former Hartford High Alumni, two in school historical programs by the Billings Farm Museum and Journey Back in Time and research projects about life in White River over the past 100 years by current White River School classes. All former students and staff of Hartford High School (1908-1963), Memorial Annex (1963-1970), White River Elementary (1970-1994), and the White River School (1994 to present) are invited to an Open House and Celebration on June 5, 2008. (Exact time TBA)

Former students and others who wish to make a donation to purchase a library book in memory of someone or honoring someone may view the list at the White River School website: www.hartfordschools.net or get this information by calling the school (295-8650). Donated books will have a special bookplate. (All book donations need to be processed through the school library.)

Hartford's Historic Districts

The Hartford Historic Preservation Commission is in the middle of finishing up our Historic Districts by designing and printing brochures and installing signs at entrances to

each district. As the cost of the signs (\$390.00 each) is more than the funds we have available, we are hoping citizens will be able to contribute towards this cost. All contributions will be tax deductible.

Checks can be made out to "Town of Hartford: Historic Sign Account" and mailed or delivered to the Department of Planning and Development Services at 171 Bridge Street, White River Jct., VT 05001.

The districts are: Christian Street (from the cemetery to the Hazen farm), Hartford Village, Jericho, Quechee Village, West Hartford, Downtown White River Jct., and Wilder Village.

If you have any questions, please contact Pat Stark or Matt Osborn at 295-3075.

Alumni Day Open House

The Hartford Historical Society will again be holding a special open house on Alumni Day, Sat., June 28th, to start following the parade and running until 3:00 pm.

The Society has a growing collections of yearbooks and school photos, which will be on display. Stop by and reminisce with former classmates, and refresh your memories browsing through the pages of your class's yearbook. Possibly you can help us identify some of the unknown students and teachers in our many school photos!

Alumni Memories

Class Mosts

Class of 1968

	Boy	Girl
Tallest	Jerry Bachelder	Robin Garran
Shortest	John Lambert	Mary Lambert
Personality	Jim Rogers	Kathy Guarino
Actor - Actress	Gay Reed	Peg McKinnon
Optimists	Gay Reed	Andrea Martin
Pessimists	Dave Timmons	Deb Capron
Athletes	Tom Scelza	Missy Jasmin
Clowns	Paul St. Peter	Missy Jasmin
Lovers	Alan Mathon	Sandy Ducharme
Success	George Foley	Andrea Martin
Arguers	Jerry Bachelder	Cathy Hazen
Dancers	Billy Brown	Missy Jasmin
Neatest - Best Dressed	Jim Rogers	Kathy Guarino
Laziest	John Alexander	Jean Sartwell
Leaders	George Foley	Andrea Martin
Ambitious	Tom Scelza	Andrea Martin
Most Polite	Bill Burnett	Dianne Spaulding
Loudest	Phil Adams	Kathy Lawrence
Blushers	Steve Gray	Carol Rosenbeck
Serious	Jim Jardine	Gail Grigel
Musical	Ken Jones	Gail Grigel
Shyest	Jim Jardine	Sue Perry
Eaters	Gay Reed	Chris Keeler
Daring	Bill Brown	Linda Fuller
Nighthawks	John Spaulding	Missy Jasmin
Sophisticated	Jim Rogers	Tessie Clifford
Wholesome	Jim Jardine	Johanna Smola
Best Looking	Jim Rogers	Peg McKinnon
Brainiest	Jerry Bachelder	Gail Grigel
Wolf - Wolverine	Bill Brown	Linda Fuller
Talkative	Phil Adams	Kathy Lawrence

Class of 1988

	Boy	Girl
Athletic	Gordon Willey	Tabatha Willey
Talkative	Bruce Hathorn	Jessica Chase
Most Likely to Be Late	Todd Libbey	Susie McCoy
Class Partiers	Jason Tucker	Jessica Chase
Best Dressed	Jon Haehnel	Christie Pippin

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From the Chairman

By Dorothy Yamashita, *Board Chairman*
chairman@hartfordhistory.org

Dear Members of HHS,

Glad to see so many of you on April 9 when Ralph Lehman provided us with memories of his many years as Hartford Town Manager. Most of you shared at least some of those experiences; to summarize 35 years in one hour is quite an accomplishment in itself! Thanks Mary Nadeau, for arranging another fine program with delicious refreshments!

With the month of May, we resume our Sunday afternoon

Garipay House Open House. Drop in and check up on our collections. Maybe you'll recognize old friends in some of our unidentified photos. There's a new donation of pictures from the Alice Smith collection, with many school pictures of her students over the years. If she was your teacher, maybe we have YOUR picture.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our Open Houses or at our Annual Meeting/Program on June 11th!

Dorothy

News and Notes

HHS 21st Century Honor Roll

The Board of Directors have been busy reviewing the submissions and will reveal the first "batch" of honorees at the Annual Meeting on June 11th. Be sure to be there for the unveiling of this project! And remember, this is an ongoing project, so you can send in a submission at any time.

If you need a form, contact Pat Stark.

250th Anniversary Planning Committee

The 250th Anniversary Planning Committee has been meeting regularly to coordinate the efforts of local towns in planning a fitting celebration for the summer of 2011. The group met last on March 27th at the Hartland Library, and has representatives from most Upper Valley towns that were chartered in the summer of 1761. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 26th at 7:00 pm, at a location TBA.

While each town will conduct their own local events, the committee is trying to help coordinate things like scheduling and regional activities. Vital Communities has expressed interest in creating a region-wide Valley Quest in honor of the anniversary, and ideas like a traveling Quilt Exhibition, pageants, concerts, and, of course, fireworks have all been discussed.

Committee members have been trying to reach out to contact other interested persons, and representatives from schools, churches, and other nonprofit organiza-

tions who may be interested in participating in the planning for the events of 2011. If you or anyone you know would be interested in helping, please call Jim Kenison at (802) 738-5333 or email Pat Stark at pstark@hartford-vt.org.

Oral History Project

Although we have not had any new interviews in several months, I am very happy to announce that it has given Lyla Collins a chance to INDEX all the interviews we have – all 65 of them! THANKS LYLA! Without her many volunteer hours we would have no idea what is in these interviews! If any of you would like to 'try your hand' at interviewing folks please let Pat know – we continue to lose valuable interviewees – such as the recent death of Ruth West. Fortunately we DO have one from John Dutton!

Welcome Rich Gallagher to the HHS Board

I am excited to have the opportunity to serve on the board of the Hartford Historical Society. I grew up in Rochester, New York, and spent the last few years in Florida working for Outward Bound and studying education at the University of Florida. I moved to the Upper Valley after being hired as a social studies teacher at Hartford Memorial Middle School. I look forward to learning more about the history of Hartford and bringing this knowledge into my classroom.

Rich Gallagher

Curator's Corner

By Pat Stark, *Archivist*
archivist@hartfordhistory.org

It's spring (finally!) and summer is just around the corner, with its usual activities including yard sales. Remember to keep an eye out for any "treasures" at those sales or if you are cleaning out to have one. Anything with a business, church or school name on it - even if it doesn't seem "old" is great. So are photos, post cards, programs, etc. Call me if you have any questions (295-3077, days).

It's also a time for home improvement projects, and we need to paint the wood on the lower level of the Garipay House (porches and around windows) to preserve this valuable asset. We hope to get enough

volunteers together so we do not have to hire someone to have it done as money is tight for us all. If you are willing to use a paintbrush, please contact me or one of the Directors as soon as possible. As of today, a date has not been set, but if you can help us out we will try to schedule it at your convenience!

Wanted! Dress forms that can be used for displaying articles of clothing from our collection which we are presently unable to display. If you have any that you'd consider donating, please let us know.

Thanks for taking an interest in our collections.

News and Notes

Annual Business Meeting

The Hartford Historical Society's annual Business Meeting and Election will be held on Wednesday, June 11th, before our program on the Twin State Airport.

Anyone interested in serving on the Board of Directors is encouraged to contact one of our Directors. Contact information appears on page 2 of this newsletter.

History Expo 2007

The Annual Vermont History Expo will be held again at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds on June 21 and 22. The

Hartford Historical Society will again be participating, this year with a display centered around the event's theme: "Industry & Innovation: Vermont yankee Ingenuity."

This year's display is entitled: "The Wilder Brothers: Their Mill, Their Village, Their Legacy."

Volunteers are needed to man the booth on both Saturday and Sunday, please consider volunteering and let us know if you can help out!

Anyone with information, stories or photographs to share is asked to contact Pat at 295-3077 (days), or 296-2192 (evenings).

Alumni Memories

Class Mosts, Continued

Friendliest
Best Buddies
Class Flirts
Most Artistic
Worst Drivers
Class Couple
Most Likely to Succeed
Most Musical

Boy
Chuck Eastman
Steve Easler/Rafael Flores
Cozy Nott
Mike Viens
Mike Viens
Keith Ballou
Jon Haehnel
Jon Dyer

Girl
Kelly Donahue
Tacia Woodin/Marcy Hoisington
Wendy Burt
Shannon Willoughby
Michelle Viens
Jody Rozecki
Jennifer Devost
Jenn Carbee

Hartford Historical Society

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HARTFORD, VT

June Program:
Wed., June 11th - 7:00 p.m.
White River Junction's Twin-
State Airport

HHS Calendar

Special Meetings, Programs and Events

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

Wednesday, June 11 -- *Twin State Airport*, Jim Kenison will present a pictorial history of the airport that served White River Junction, following our annual business meeting.

Sat./Sun. June 21-22 -- *Vermont History Expo 2008*, Tunbridge Fairgrounds, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Come visit Hartford's booth! Volunteers also needed.

Sat. June 28th -- *Alumni Day Open House*, Garipay House, following the parade until 3:00 pm. Check out our extensive yearbook and school photo collections!

Sat., July 12 -- *Hartford Library Open House*, Hartford Village Library, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm. The Society will present a powerpoint on Hartford Village History.

Ongoing Meetings and Events

Regular meetings and Open Houses are held at the Garipay House, 1461 Maple Street in Hartford Village unless otherwise noted.

First Tuesday (February through October) -- *Open House*. 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. The public is welcome to visit the Garipay House and see items from our collection on display. Volunteers are on hand to give tours and answer any questions.

Second Sunday (May through September) -- *Open House*. 1:30 - 4:00 p.m. The public is welcome to visit the Garipay House and see items from our collection on display. Volunteers are on hand to give tours and answer any questions.

Fourth Tuesday -- *HHS Board of Directors Meeting*. 7:00 p.m. For more information, please contact Dorothy Yamashita, Board Chairman (See page 2 for contact info.)