



Hartford Historical Society

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

HARTFORD • QUEECHEE • WEST HARTFORD • WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER

Volume 21, No. 5

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May-June 2009

Research Can Be Timely or Just Plain Luck

By Art Peale of Gardens of Stone

Recently a gentleman came to the Historical Society Genealogy Center looking for some help in finding where his grandfather was buried. All the information he had was that he served in a Vermont unit during the Civil War, and he lived in Lyme, N.H.

I told him to give me the grandfather's name, which was Nathan B. (Baxter) Stark, and I'd see what I could do. Upon looking on-line under "Civil War-VT." I discovered Nathan listed along with his unit and the name of the cemetery in Northfield in which he was buried. I also looked up the 1900's census and discovered his wife's name and the names of in-laws living in the same household; their name was Slade.

Northfield is a beautiful town and the home of Norwich University where my Dad graduated about 1925. So my wife and I had a good trip for that alone.

I went to the town hall and gave the name to the

clerk, who was quite helpful. Some town clerks point you to the records and put you on your own. Others won't let you in the vault at all. And others pull the books out and help you look. In this case it was the latter.

The records in Northfield are wonderful—good death and burial records. "Transportation of remains" records were great. The only problem, I was looking over the clerks shoulder. We did find some records on the in-laws, but not on Nathan.

While we were looking, the clerk got called away to the front desk to help someone else. While she was gone, being the do-it-yourself person I am, I reached for the burial book and decided to look for myself. Under 1907, right at the top of the page was Nathan B. Slade. I said this is too much of a coincidence. Looking to the page referenced in the index, sure enough, there was Nathan B. Stark, listed under his in-laws name and having died in Leominster, Worcester County, Mass. There were also names of other family members who handled details and signed papers.

(Continued on page 3)

NEXT PROGRAM

Wednesday, June 10, 7pm at the Greater Hartford Church of Christ in Hartford Village. There will be a Brief Annual Meeting of the Society, followed by a talk by Roy Black, followed with refreshments.

Roy Black, a lifelong resident of Wilder, will speak on the **village of Wilder** as he remembers it from his youth. This talk will include log drives, the paper mill, various businesses, the Ku Klux Klan in Wilder, the various ethnic groups and how they interacted to create a self-contained village in the early part of the last century. Hope to see you there!

From the Chair . . .

There's a melody ringing in my ears; do you remember this old Hungarian round?
"Sweet the evening air of May, soft my cheek caressing -
Sweet the evening air of May, with its scented blessing.
White and ghostly in the gloom -
Shine the apple trees in bloom
...Apple trees in bloom.....Apple trees in bloom..."....

Warmer days mean the re-opening of the Garipay House and resuming our regular schedule (see Calendar) In fact, I'm excited about a lot of happenings, and they are all on the Calendar. However the preparation that goes into these events is not reflected in the announcements. Special thanks to Mary Nadeau for the many interesting programs she arranges for us—to the people who provide refreshments, and to those who arrange for us to meet at the United Church of Christ. Also, on behalf of the Board members, thank you to the Hartford Library for providing a warm meeting room in the Genealogy Center for us during the winter months.

There are many Hartford residents who deserve recognition, and as the school year ends in June, it seems an appropriate time to thank our his-

tory teachers and their students. We have extended a special invitation to them to attend our June BBQ. Jen Boeri-Boyce has been recognized by the Southeast Vermont Community Learning Collaborative for her Vermont in the Civil War curriculum development which is available on-line at

www.flowofhistory.org/lessons/plans/soldier-lesson.php

On behalf of Hartford High School, Woody Rothe would like to extend a special thank you to Pat Stark. "This course could not have happened without her. Her willingness to assist the students has been invaluable." Pat, on behalf of the Board members, I echo Woody's thanks. Three cheers for our Archivist, Pat Stark!

Serving as chair of this Board has been a privilege, but it is time to pass the Gavel. Thank you all for your support. Please notify the Nominating committee if your interests and time will permit you to serve on the Board.

See you at the annual meeting in June!

Dorothy Yamashita

Curator's Corner

Spring is here and the Garipay House will be open by the time you read this. I hope you will be able to stop over this year—either for our 'Book Signing' Event with Jay Barrett on June 2 or at another Open House. Remember you can always contact me if you'd like to come over at another time. Our collections keep growing—a mixed blessing—so new things are always going on display as we learn more about the artifacts that have been on display for some time. Hope to see you this summer!

"OUR PAST IS OUR FUTURE -

HISTORY HAPPENS TODAY!"



Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

<http://www.hartfordhistory.org>

Officers

Dot Jones, President	802-295-2701
Bill Wittik, Acting Vice President	802-295-9683
David Ford, Secretary	802-356-2776
Rich Gallagher, Treasurer	603-727-8418

Directors

Dorothy Yamashita, Chair 603-448-1067

Randy Dickson	280-1780	Joyce Miller	295-2025
Peggy McDerment	295-2357	Bill Wittik	295-9683

Newsletter Editor: Muriel Farrington 802-295-6511
newsletter@hartfordhistory.org

Archivist: Pat Stark 802-478-1110

News and Notes

THANKS! To Deborah Doyle-Schechtman

for the donation of her collection of over 20 years of research materials, including several oral interviews, that went into her book “*By the Old Mill Stream – a History of Quechee, Vt*”. She has ALSO given us her collection of *the Quechee Times*, which almost completes our collection! We are now only missing 3 issues: **1999 Volume 1 + 3, and 2000 volume 3**. This is an awesome donation and will help any researchers into Quechee in the future.

Report from the Hartford High History Project

From Woody.Rothe

In addition to his high praise of Pat Stark and expression of appreciation for her assistance, Woody Rothe reports that the students are making excellent progress and about half way through their current project. Completed interviews include those with Roy Black, Chuck Bohi, David Briggs, David Ford, John Lutz, Phil Renz, and Sam Romano. Thanks to all of you who have participated in many ways to make this project possible.

There is still time to contact Woody or Mike Hathorn at (802)295-8620 x 107

Watch the Valley News for an announcement of their new website on Google Earth where we can **SEE** our local history on our computer screens!

(Continued from page 1)

I was referred to a gentleman who is very familiar with the cemetery, and who was leaving on vacation in five minutes, but who said he'd meet me at the town hall and we'd look at cemetery plot maps. Northfield has great records of these also. Actually all towns are supposed to have these—individual drawings of each burial plot, and where the graves are located in the plots. All we came up with was the plot for the father and mother-in-law under the names as found in the census. It showed the burial of the in-laws and two empty gravesites.

We went up to the cemetery and found that plot, and took pictures. I thought that perhaps Nathan and his wife were buried here, but had no grave-stones. I've run into that before. As we were walking back to the truck, I glanced to my right and there, right in front of me, was a large stone with the name “STARK” on it. I said to myself

“Ohhhhhho this cannot be”. Sure enough, there was Nathan, his wife and several children, and several other family members all in one large family plot. Twenty feet more to the right and I never would have seen it.

I was ecstatic, and so was the gentleman I had helped find his family.

This might be a lesson in doing research. When you give a name to someone else, that's the only name they have in their mind to look for. Whereas, if you are able to do your own looking you have other names in your mind that are familiar. And these may help you to do your research and find someone that might otherwise be missed.

An Open Invitation to the Upper Valley Community:

The Hartford Historical Society

is pleased to host
a book signing for Frank J. Barrett's new postcard history book entitled

HARTFORD, VERMONT

Won't you come and join us at the Garipay House
1461 Maple St., Hartford Village
On **June 2, 2009 for a BBQ**
5:00 -7:00 P.M.

Board Members will cook hot dogs for you! Ice water will be available.

The rest will be Pot Luck!

What will you contribute?

Music will be in the air!

Would you like to set up a croquet game? Play badminton?

Jump rope? Shoot marbles? Play hop-scotch???

Or just bring a lawn chair and relax!

{It will be on the porch if raining!}

Special Guests: Hartford High School and Middle School History Teachers and their students

Please phone Joyce Miller, 802.295.2025

or Dorothy Yamashita, 603.448-1067

if you plan to attend and whether you can bring a 'pot luck' item.

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet the author and to exchange stories of our life and experiences in Hartford!

Parking is available on local streets.

AN INTERVIEW WITH A NAVY WAVE

An excerpt from the Oral History Transcription of Evelyn Marsh Putney, Interviewed by Diana Leskovar for the Hartford Oral history Project on May 21, 2006

I had wonderful summers at Orrs Island. But eventually the war came, and Orrs Island was in Casco Bay, Maine, which was vulnerable to submarine attacks in World War II, so they closed down the [girls] camp, and I stopped work. I went to work for the South Portland Shipyard, making boats for World War II. I worked there for a couple of years. I lived in Portland with two roommates, but I always wanted to join the Navy, and my mother had two sons in the service, so she didn't want me to join, but when I reached 21 I enlisted. I was sent to boot camp at Hunter College, New York, in the Bronx, and I really enjoyed that. I really enjoyed marching and all the training that I had, it made me proud to be in a uniform.

DL: Were there many women?

EP: Oh yes, hundreds. We took different tests to see what we were qualified for, and I was likely to go to Yeoman School. Yeoman is the Navy way of keeping records, so I was sent to Stillwater, Oklahoma A+M. I enlisted in December, 1943, and in February we were sent to Oklahoma, where it was spring, it was amazing to see flowers in bloom at that time. I loved Oklahoma, and I really loved the school. We were marching to and from classes, and there was a group of Army engineers who were taking courses too, and they marched along with us, so it was quite thrilling.

DL: (I looked up on the mantel and I saw a picture of Evelyn in her uniform.) And where were you in this uniform?

EP: It was taken in Washington, D.C., because I went to Yeoman School in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and stayed until April. In April I was transferred to Washington, D.C., in the Bureau of Ships. The place where I working in the Navy Department was counter measures, which were trying to take down the radar, and so I worked for a Captain and two Lieutenants, and others, several Waves. I worked making out orders for the peo-

ple and civilians who worked for counter measures, working with Massachusetts Institute of Technology, so I had to make the orders for them to go back and forth. Then I was cleared for Top Secret, and one of my duties was to go back and forth to Top Secret files and bring back daily reports of the battles of the Navy ships who had encountered radar, so they could see what it was like, the civilians and people in the Navy in my office.

DL: (Evelyn was sharing that the Waves during that period of time were freeing men up to work on ships, and so that was really their role, and she is talking a little bit about her duties as a Wave).

EP: I was able to go from the Navy Department to the Pentagon, to bring back reports of radar encounters, so that was the time that I had been to the Pentagon. Eventually when I was working in Washington I lived with three other girls, four probably, in a suite at the Hotel Vermont, so that was exciting, and didn't dream I would be living in Vermont at that time!

Eventually....I had been corresponding with a Marine from Portland, and when he came back from the Pacific we were married, that was my first marriage, a wartime marriage, which was a definite mistake, but anyway.....you live and learn. So, when the war was over, in August, '45, I was discharged and I went with my former husband to California, where he was stationed in the Marines, at the Port Chicago Naval Magazine, where the Marines were guarding the ammunition. So we lived in a Navy apartment, which was furnished for us, and I went to work at the Navy Magazine, in the office, and I liked that very much. One night, about midnight, there was a knock on the door of our apartment, and Naval Intelligence was there, and wanted me to go with them to take notes of a case of black marketing, where they had arrested some sailors. So I went with them to Pittsburgh, California, which was about ten miles away from Concord, where we were living, and I worked through the night taking notes of the interrogation, and then they brought me home, and I typed the notes the next

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

day. Then a day later they wanted me to take notes again, so I did that. It was working with the FBI and Naval Intelligence, and it was quite thrilling. These sailors were stealing butter and meat from the kitchens. I don't know what the result was, but I took my notes and typed them up.

Eventually we came back East, when my husband was discharged, and he wanted to go to West Lebanon to learn to be a barber. So we came back and lived in West Lebanon for awhile. When we were living in West Lebanon the VA in White River had obtained my name in some way, that I was eligible to work for them. So Mr. Foley from the VA Hospital came to West Lebanon to see me. We didn't have a phone. He told me what the job was, and I had a one-year-old boy, so I had to find somebody to take care of him. I decided to go back to work at the VA, which was a good thing really. I found somebody to take care of my one-year-old, and I went by taxi back and forth to his caretaker, and to work every day. I worked for the VA in White River from 1947 until 1974. All of the time in the Navy, and as a civilian in the Navy, that counted towards my retirement. I eventually ended up at the VA as Secretary to the Chief of Surgery, who was a wonderful man. I was involved with the medical training at the VA, combined with Hitchcock. I was very happy, I think I was always happy in any type of work that I was doing.

DL: So you retired in 1974?

EP: Yes.

EP: From the time I took my one-year-old to somebody in White River to be taken care of, she, Mrs. Chamberlain, took care of my children, one

after another, so eventually she took care of the four of them. I was very fortunate about that.

I loved working with the doctors, and Dr. Crandall, my Chief, gave me a lot of responsibility. When I was working at the VA I met Norris Putney, who was Chief of the X-Ray Department. At that time when I got to know him, Kenny, my oldest, was 16, and he wanted to have a BB gun, and I didn't know anything about guns. So I heard that Norris Putney was involved with the Rod and Gun Club, so I talked to him about guns for Kenny, and eventually he was friendly with Kenny, and took him to meetings of the Rod and Gun Club. One night Kenny came home and said I had been elected Secretary of the Rod and Gun Club, which I did for 17 years. Anyway, eventually Norris and I fell in love, and we got married in 1965, in May, over forty years ago. So we moved here to Wilder, where Norris' home was located. He was also a divorced person. He had a big house, and so plenty of room for the family. So I came with my four children, and they went to the Hartford Schools, which were very well run. I want to give a lot of credit to the Hartford School Department, because all four of my children went there. Steve, my second son, went to Dartmouth after graduating from Hartford High, so I was proud of that.

DL: As you think about your life accomplishments, what do you feel the most proud of?

EP: My time in the Navy. I belong to a group of ex-Waves, but I can't go to meetings. I have been to a few meetings, but I am very proud to be in uniform and singing patriotic songs. I was proud of my work in Surgery at the VA, and the people at the VA were wonderful.

Commercial/Institutional Members:

Meeting House Furniture Restoration – Jonathan Schechtman
Hartford Memorial Middle School – Anderson Thorpe

Membership rates:

Individual: \$15

Family [same address]: \$20

Senior: \$10

Senior family: \$15

Commercial/Institutional: \$25

Junior membership – No fee but needs a sponsor [contact Dorothy Yamashita]

A SEARCH THROUGH CEMETERY RECORDS

by Ron Heroux

The other day while I was transcribing names and dates from a cemetery survey I came across an entry that demanded my attention. It was that of a young soldier, buried in our town, and with the entry "MIA" next to his year of death, 1945. Appended to the information was the name of his unit. I could not help wondering what happened to him.

Modern technology gives us great advantages over years past, and a search of the soldier's unit on the Internet soon led me to the discovery that Albert's plane was shot down while on a mission over Germany. Sometimes history has a story to tell, and in this case it turns out there was a survivor of that crash. That survivor related the final moments of battle as he, and likely Albert and his comrades, experienced it. Here is his story.

A Big Story In A Few Words Tail Gunner Went Down Shooting

By Allen Ostrom

The grim air combat memories of Selmer Haakenson are recorded on a half a page of paper, typewritten, double spaced. But in those precious few words are written his agonizing, personal life-death struggle, refusal to lay down his twin 50's in what had to be a hopeless situation, a miraculous survival from a separated tail section, the loss of an eye and two months in Stalag 17B. And... the loss of EVERY ONE of his B-17 crew comrades!

This was the Donald Christensen crew of the 603rd. They were on their fourth mission for the 398th on March 2, 1945. The target, the secondary that day, was a petrochemical facility at Bohlen, located 17 miles southeast of Merseburg, Germany. And it was one of those long hummers, like seven hours on oxygen. Solid clouds beneath the group formation, led by Col. Pete Rooney, with tight formations difficult at best, impossible at the worst.

The flight path to the target and back was somewhat parallel with the northern border of Czechoslovakia. Just before the turn to the target a squadron of FW-190's smacked into Ken Beckstrom's 603 high squadron. Christensen, flying No. 2 on the wing of element leader T.L. Guice, took several 20-mm hits and was forced from the formation. One of these hits caught Haakenson in the face, knocking him backwards on the catwalk in the tail section.

"I landed on my chute, so I grabbed it and hooked it up on one side," recalled Haakenson. "The flak vest kept me from hooking up on both sides. I got back on the seat and kept

firing at the 190's until the entire tail section separated and went into a spin. I was pinned in the tail until it stalled out for a second. I got the vest off, hooked up the chute and bailed out the tail door. I just made it."

Haakenson said he came down in a small town and was quickly rounded up and taken to German authorities. From here I was taken to a hospital, X-rayed, and then sent to Prague. I recall the hospital being on higher ground than the rest of the city and the doctor who took out my eye was a Dr. Schutz."

All this drama was observed by a number of Czech civilians, and later recorded by Manuel F. van Eyck, who now lives in California. A friend of van Eyck, working on a factory building in the city of Slany, 13 miles from Prague, was one of the eye witnesses to the demise of the Christensen aircraft. He wrote - "At approximately 1100 hours we saw American bombers with fighter escort flying east. At approximately 1300 hours all bomber groups were returning and we heard the engines from one bomber flying at a very low altitude. Two engines were not working. When it was directly above us the tail section broke away and one man bailed out.

"The Germans guarding us began shooting at him, but the strong northwest wind carried him away. The tail section and aircraft crashed into the ground. The Germans waited for a while and then entered the plane and pulled out eight dead airmen, the Germans took the shoes from the airmen and other parts of the equipment."

"The bodies were taken to the cemetery in Slany for burial. The next day the graves were covered with flowers, which the Gestapo did not appreciate."

Van Eyck, who searched for a number of years before locating Haakenson - the lone survivor - also reported that the Christensen B-17 was not the only aircraft to be downed during this drama in the skies over Czechoslovakia on this day. "Two German fighters also came down," he reported. "The first landed due to engine failure. The pilot was Lt. Krapp, and he said he was hit by one of the American bombers. His FW-190 was identified with a blue '3.' The second crashed into the ground and the pilot was killed. He was Lt. Gunther Schulz." Thus, it could well be that Haakenson, in the final moments of his plane's death plunge, took one - possibly two - of his tormentors with him.

Besides Haakenson, the tail gunner, the Donald Christensen crew was made up of William Love, co-pilot; Harry Ostrom, navigator; John Gustafson, bombardier; Robert Dudley, engineer-gunner; Elmer Gurba, radio; Albert Carlisle,

(Continued on page 8)

ball turret; and Kenney Plantz, waist. The bodies of all Christensen crew members, except Plantz, were recovered and sent home to respective families. Plantz is buried At Loraine American Military Cemetery, near Metz, France.

(article reprinted with permission from the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association - the original source in Flak News Volume 6, Number 4, Page (s) 4, October 1991.)



* * * * *

The story could not tell what the surviving flier did not know about Albert Carlisle. When I opened the old WWII veterans' ledger containing service information for Mr. Carlisle I noted that the MIA information had been annotated with his date of death. Turning the page - which I did absentmindedly - I was surprised and delighted to find

pasted to it a yellowed newspaper clipping and photograph

detailing his short life and the difficulties associated with confirming his death and with the return of his remains.

Many people gave their lives or their good health that we may remain free. It is an honor to offer a thankful tribute when an opportunity comes our way.

Albert's obituary indicates that, although he died in March 1945, his grave was not located until 3 years later when, in the spring of 1948, his parents received 3 different grave location reports, 6 weeks apart - one from Czechoslovakia, one from northern Germany, and the final correct one from St. Avold, France.

Albert had attended White River Junction grammar schools and graduated from Hartford High in 1943. He had been a 4-letter man in sports but declined an athletic scholarship to the University of Nevada and enlisted in the Army Air Force.

Honor Roll

John St. Croix

John is remembered by many for his expertise as an ice skater and a teacher of the techniques of ice skating to village children. He is listed here for his immense contribution to our history by the compilation and publishing of his three pictorial histories on the *History of Hartford*. He spent many hours and untold personal funds collecting stories and copying photographs from various individuals to share with us. These individuals are mostly lost to us now, and not for his efforts many of these photographs would be unavailable to the public. A more lasting legacy to the history of Hartford cannot be imagined.

He was born on May 27, 1912 in Lisbon, NH.

He was educated in the Hartford School System, graduating with the class of 1930. He later attended the University of Vermont.

On November 22, 1951 he married Marion Hilliard in White River Junction.

He worked at the VA as the mail room supervisor for 32 years, retiring in 1972, and served as the historical advisor to the Hartford Urban Renewal Agency. He was an active member of St. Anthony's Catholic Church.

He died November 19, 2000 in Windsor, VT

Hartford Historical Society
POST OFFICE BOX 547
HARTFORD, VERMONT 05047

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 15
HARTFORD, VT

HHS Calendar

Upcoming Programs, Meetings and Events

Wednesday, May 27 – *Hartford* book signing with Frank J. “Jay” Barrett Jr. at the Quechee Library – 7pm

Tuesday, June 2 – BBQ and *Hartford* book signing with Frank J. “Jay” Barrett Jr. at the Garipay House – 6-8pm

Wednesday, June 10 – HHS Annual Meeting followed by a talk on **Wilder by Roy Black** followed by refreshments. At the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village – 7 pm

Saturday, August 15 – **White River Valley Historic Fair in Bethel**. This will be a great event and is designed to ‘take the place of’ the History Expo for this area this year - speakers, crafts, displays, children’s area, etc. For more info contact Pat or check out our website.

Ongoing Monthly Meetings

First Tuesday (May through October) - Open House - Garipay House, 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, 6:00 - 8:00 PM. 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 - Garipay House, 1461 Maple Street/Route 14, Hartford Village, 1:30 - 4:00 PM. 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.

Third Wednesday - Hartford Historic Preservation Commission Meeting - Hartford Municipal Building, 171 Bridge Street, White River Junction, 4:30 PM.

Fourth Tuesday - HHS Board of Directors Meeting - Garipay House, 1461 Maple Street [Route 14], Hartford Village, [or the Hartford Library from October through April] 7:00 PM. For more information, contact Dorothy Yamashita, Board Chairman.