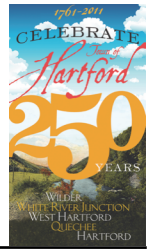




# Hartford Historical Society

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

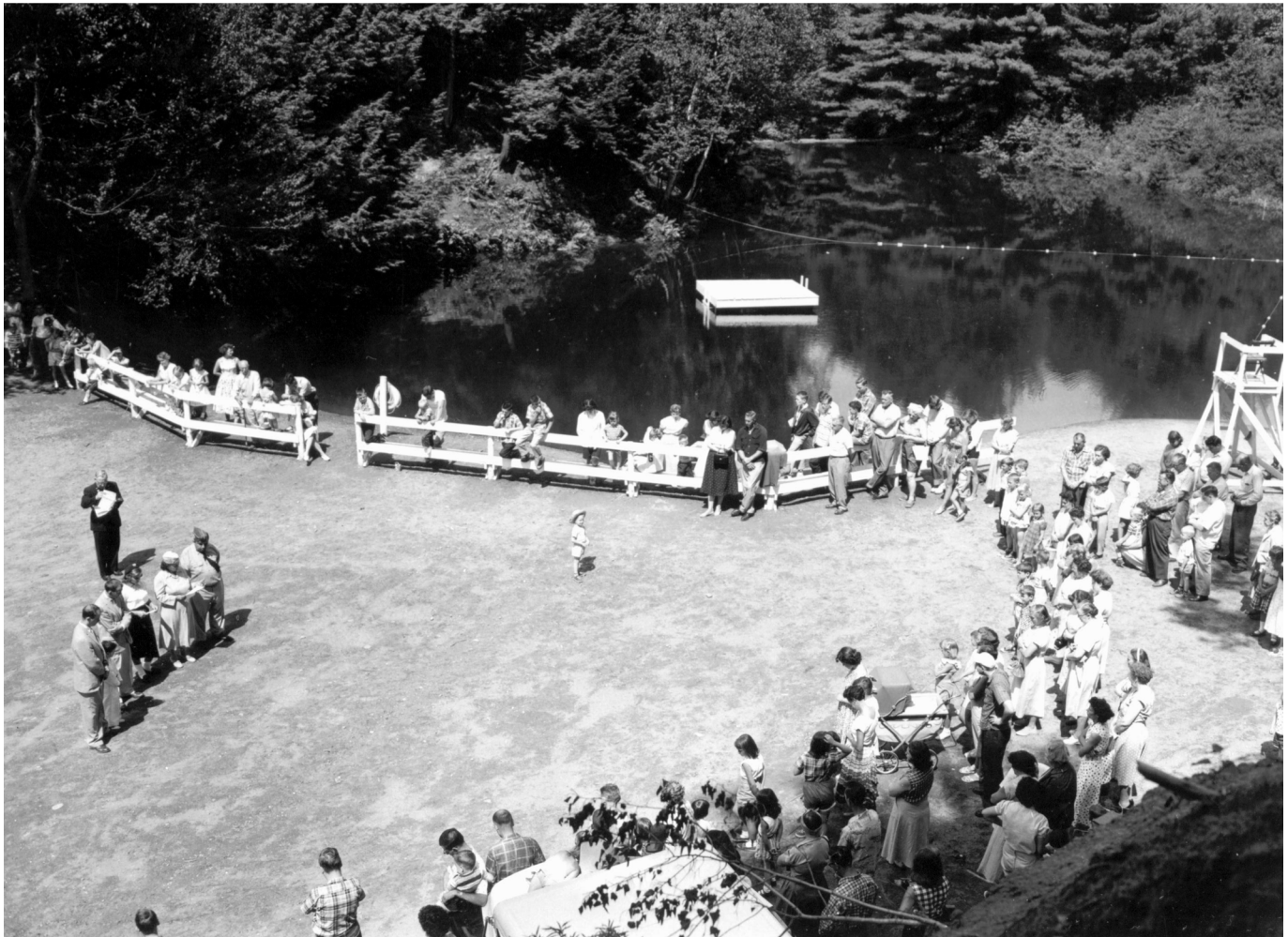
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Volume 31, No. 4

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July-August 2018



## Hartford in the 'Fifties As Seen By Collamer Abbott

*By Scott Fletcher*

Collamer Abbott was a photographer, journalist, and teacher who was born in Wilder in 1919 and died in White River Junction in 2012 at age 92.

Abbott made iconic images of Hartford in the 1950's including kids swimming and sledding, farmers and livestock on hillsides, and everyday scenes around town. Many of the photos appeared in the *Brattleboro Reformer* or *Valley News* where Collamer was a reporter and photographer.

Dana and David O'Neill, owners of Northlight Editions in White River Junction, recall that Collamer was among the first visitors when they opened a print studio in the Tip Top Building in 2003. He brought in a few old negatives and David O'Neill made high-resolution enlargements using ultrachrome pigment ink that produces rich, black and white images using the full spectrum of colors. (*Above, dedication of the Hartford Pool, 1957.*)

*Continued on page 6.*

## From the Editor . . .

Did you know that July 4 is not only the birthday of the United States of America but, on that day in 1761, Governor Benning Wentworth issued the original charter for the Town of Hartford.

At a special fundraiser for the society on Friday, July 20, we will have the opportunity to meet Susan Cameron Bennett who iPhone users will recognize as the voice of Siri. Susan will explain her unusual career, and she and her husband will perform songs and take requests. The event is at 6 p.m. at the Engine House on South Main Street in White River Junction. For more details, please see page 11.

On Saturday, August 11, the society will present the annual "Ice Cream Social" in partnership with the Hartford Library. This light-hearted event will feature games for children and take place from 1-4 p.m. at the Garipay House. More information is on page 4.

On Sunday, August 12, society members will offer homemade refreshments to event participants at a rest area on Interstate 89 at Sharon. Volunteers are invited to contribute baked goods and help staff a table at the event. For more information, please contact Roy Black at the number below.



*Photo of Collamer Abbott courtesy of Northlight Editions.*

This issue, we feature photos given to the historical society by Hartford resident Collamer Abbott. Hartford Select Board member Becca White knew Collamer as, "Uncle Bud." He was actually her great uncle. "I think of him more for his writing than his photographs," she says. As a child, Becca exchanged letters with Uncle Bud and his were always witty and filled with loving advice. For awhile, they wrote in French. "What I remember most was that he encouraged me to be myself, and I think that has had a big impact on my life," she says. Our story of this talented resident starts on page 1.

There are two additions to the HHS website. One allows you to join the society or renew your membership online using PayPal. The second is a link to our new online store. Please visit us at [hartfordhistory.org](http://hartfordhistory.org).

*Mary Ann Devins, Editor*

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### 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.



# David Briggs Recalls Growing Up in White River Junction

By Mary Nadeau

David Briggs gave what could best be described as a “delightful” account of growing up in White River Junction during the period from 1948 to 1958. His boyhood turf was located in the area around Cascadnac Avenue, Barnes Avenue, Hazen Street and Maple Street to the present site of the Co-op Foodstore.

Using a PowerPoint display of period photographs, David led us through many of his childhood adventures, and he described growing up as a “happy time.” Members of the audience could be heard murmuring as he recalled the names of people, both young and old, who lived in the neighborhood during this era.

Having the freedom to roam the neighborhood at will brought him into contact with many others, some of whom had a direct influence on young David. Among them were Chet Fogg, a railroad engineer, who once reached down from his perch in the engine of a locomotive and hauled a pint-sized David up into the cab before presenting him with a quarter, which represented a small fortune to a child back in the day.

Then there was Mrs. Williams, who entered “every contest that come along” and won perhaps 30 percent of them. Miss Scully, an elementary school teacher, was an early preservationist who strongly objected to the demolition of historic buildings in the area, notably the Lyman homestead. It occupied the same spot as the now-vacant Citizens Bank building.

***Mr. Renault attempted to stanch the flow of gasoline from one of his gas pumps as a cigarette dangled from his mouth.***

cigarette dangled from his mouth. That sight made a lasting impression!

David recalled the names of his playmates, or “kids in the hood,” describing their antics and adventures with his wonderful, dry sense of humor. Many of these youngsters matured to become outstanding citizens with significant accomplishments. The names are too numerous to mention here.

On Maple Street, Mr. Renault attempted to stanch the flow of gasoline from one of his gas pumps as a



*David Briggs recalled a variety of adventures with friends and neighbors while growing up in White River Junction. Briggs operates the Hotel Coolidge.*

This was one of those “you had to be there” evenings. Children during that era spent as much time as possible outside, their safety assured. Well, most of the time. David described an incident when he and his friends decided to conduct a “burn” after observing the local fire department burn hillside brush. When their fire got out of control, David made several casual trips to the kitchen sink for glasses of water to extinguish the flames until his mother became suspicious, ran outside and put the fire out with water from her mop bucket. He recalled several harrowing adventures that could have ended in injury, such as the time that he and his friends dug a hole 12 feet deep. Fortunately, the kids had to return to their homes for supper before they could carry out their plan to dig laterally as well, creating underground “rooms.”

As an adult, David earned a degree in engineering, and he looks back with horror at what could have

*Continued on page 4.*

happened had the sides collapsed while the boys were down there. (After the program, his mother, Bonnie Briggs, told me that she learned some interesting things about her son during the evening's presentation!)

***Fred Briggs sent his son all over the village to carry out errands, so David was on a first-name basis with all of the local businessmen and women.***

his son all over the village to carry out errands, so David was on a first-name basis with all of the local businessmen and women. Deciding to try his own hand at entrepreneurship, he enlisted the help of Dale and Scott Phillips and launched a shoe shining business. As people got off the train in White River

Visiting his father's place of business on the south side of the White River was known as going "overstreet."

Fred Briggs sent

Junction, they would ask, "Shine, sir?" One gentleman agreed, but he cautioned that his yellow socks must not have a single spot of black polish on them when they had finished the job. Unfortunately for the customer, David remembers the yellow socks as winding up bearing "stripes."

David noted that his old neighborhood area was changed significantly as roads were closed and traffic rerouted. During his youth for access along Taft Flat, you traveled a steep, narrow road that passed between Stern's and the present Hartford Elementary School. When the current Route 5 was built, adjacent streets in the neighborhood were sealed off and some homes were demolished. He remembers Maple Street as being lined with maple trees that, sadly, were never replaced.

Following David's entertaining and informative talk, members of the audience shared some of their own personal memories. The evening was a "happy time" for both David and the forty people who occupied the church hall.

## Bugbee History Hour

The History Hour at the Bugbee Senior Center will resume meeting on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. You may have seen, on the front page of the Valley News, about five weeks ago, the story of a West Lebanon lady, who was remodeling her home. She took down one of the ceilings and found some love letters hidden there. They were exchanged between Harold Benedict White of Hartford, Vermont and Laura Spearing Johnson of West Lebanon, New Hampshire in 1926. Laura's parents once owned the home. Our May meeting centered around this couple who were married in 1929 and still have descendants in the area. They lived in Hartford for the rest of their lives. Some of their grandchildren attended the meeting. If you would like to make a suggestion as to subjects that might be discussed in the future Bugbee History Hour please call Mary Ann Devins at 802-281-0273 or just come to the meeting.

## Ice Cream Social and Lawn Games at the Hartford Historical Society

Come and enjoy a wonderful intergenerational event with your entire family! There will be a wide variety of games set up for all ages and abilities to encourage everyone to participate and have fun. Ice cream and beverages will be provided.

Members of the Hartford Historical Society will be available to lead tours of the museum. Parking is limited at the Historical Society so families who are able to walk the short distance to the Historical Society are encouraged to park at the Hartford Library.

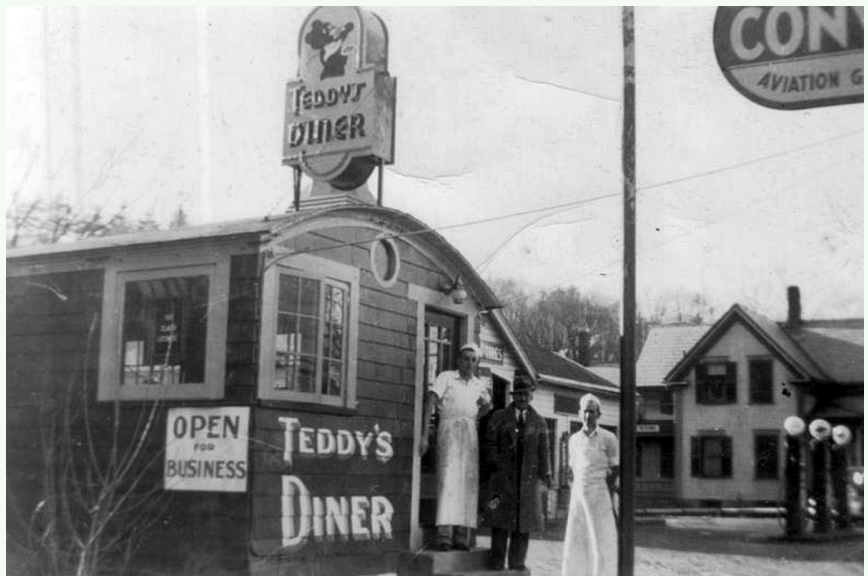
The Garipay House is located at 1641 Maple Street in Hartford Village.





## Remembering the Theriault Family Businesses

*Teddy and Ruth Theriault operated several businesses in Hartford during the 'Fifties and 'Sixties. At right is Island Park, a roller skating rink the Theriaults established in West Hartford. They provided a school bus to pick children up for an afternoon of fun and exercise. The same school bus picked the children up again in late afternoon and returned them home. The Theriault family also established and operated several businesses in town including Teddy's Hotel, Teddy's Bar and Grill, Teddy's Sports Center, Teddy's Rooming House, Norman's Spa, and Teddy's Pullman Diner. Pictured at right is Leon Thaddeus Theriault, otherwise known as Teddy around town.*





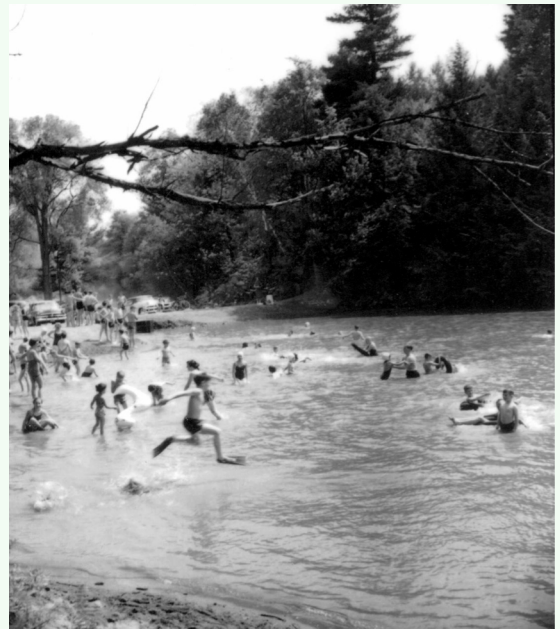
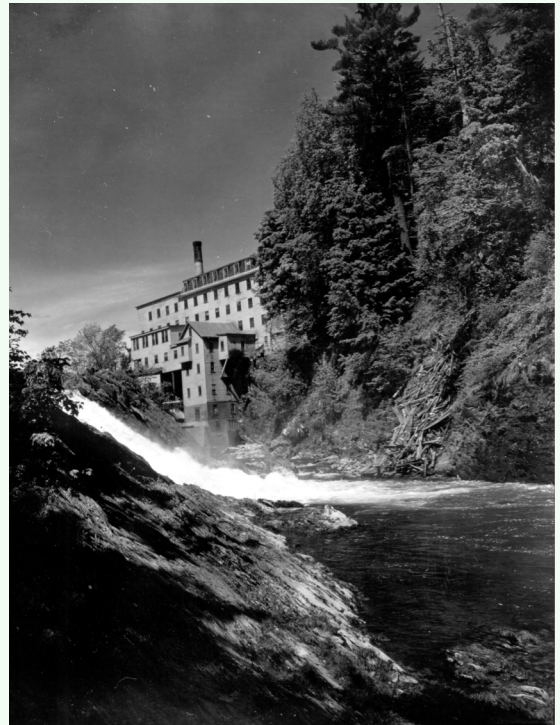


**Abbott made iconic images of Hartford including kids swimming and sledding, farmers and livestock on hillsides, and everyday scenes around town.**



*Top left and right, getting 'Old 494' ready for Railroad Enthusiasts Day in July 1957. Above, Hazen family sugaring in West Hartford in the 1950's. Right, Earl Dunbar on the tractor with Merrill Henderson in Quechee, 1957. Collamer Abbott's photos are now archived at the University of Vermont and there is a permanent exhibit at the Hartford High School Library.*





*Top left, tubing in Wilder in 1957. Top right, Dewey's Mill in Quechee, 1958. Above left, Byron Hathorn haying the Kelton farm in 1957. Above right, swimming at the Hartford Pool in 1957. Left, color guard in White River Junction in 1956. Hartford's new senior housing facility, The Village, will display Collamer Abbott photos in, "The Abbott Studio."*

*Continued on page 8.*



Photographs of Collamer Abbott continued from page 7.



Above, billboards in West Hartford. Right, a view along Christian Street. Below right, a nightscape in White River Junction in the 'Fifties.



David O'Neill enhanced some of the prints by sharpening, adjusting contrast, and removing dust spots, but he still marvels at the composition and quality of Collamer's photos.

Hanging in the hallway outside Northlight Editions is a twilight scene of White River Junction taken about two blocks away. O'Neill points to the deep shadows falling across most of the image and says, "With moody shots like this, I didn't adjust the lighting at all. Collamer knew what he was doing. He was a journalist with the eye of an artist."

The O'Neills developed a warm relationship with Collamer and presented his work at a number of venues including the Tip Top Building in 2003. In 2004, they presented an exhibit at the Lebanon Coop featuring prints of photos Collamer made in France. It was called *Paris, France and Countryside 1952*.

Also in 2004, Collamer called Kate Schaal, Director of the Quechee Library, and told her he had some old photographs of her family's farm. Kate arranged to visit Collamer at his home with Dave Izzo, president of the library board of trustees.

Kate and Dave were astonished to find the small house filled with photographs and negatives. Some of the photos featured Kate's father and brother on the farm where she grew up, which is now part of Quechee Lakes.

Quechee Library received a grant from the Vermont Arts Council to support the printing, exhibiting, and discussing of Collamer's Upper Valley photographs. Northlight Editions made prints that were displayed at the Quechee Library in an exhibition called *Changing Nature of Art and Place* in conjunction with a panel discussion on the changing nature of photography.



The event brought new recognition for Collamer and greater awareness of his photos, which are now on permanent display at the Quechee and Wilder libraries. Laminated prints are available for educational use.

Kate describes the exhibit as a wonderful collaboration between Collamer, Northlight Editions, and the library. "It was Collamer using his 1950's equipment and skill combined with modern printing techniques," she says.

"Collamer's photographs are luminous," Kate says. "They take you right into that place in time." The locations still exist but some are hardly recognizable after more than 50 years and the development of Quechee Lakes golf course and Lake Pinneo.

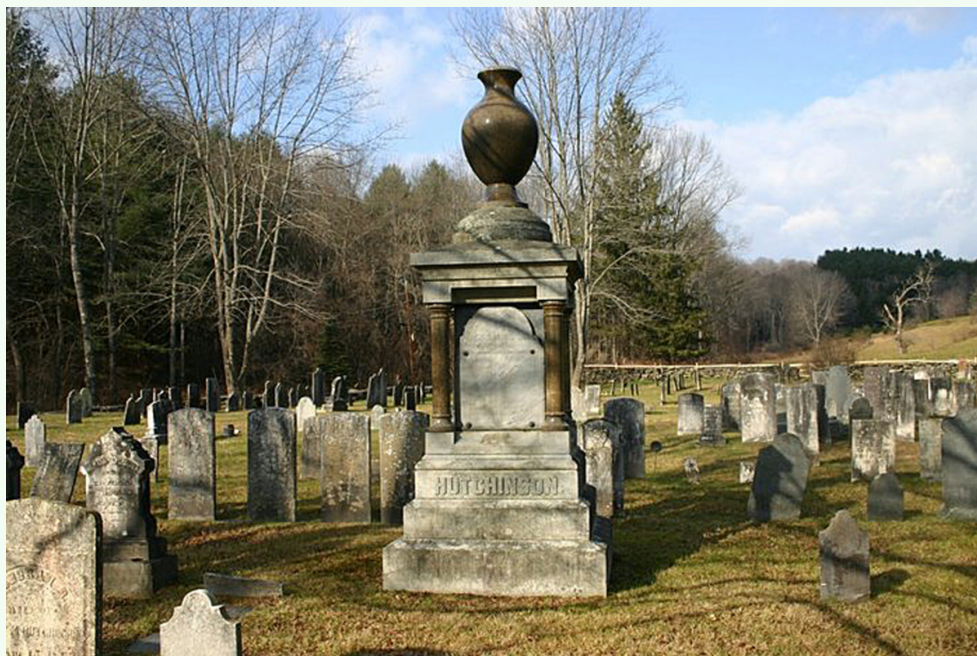
"Collamer was a very, very humble person." Kate recalls. "I think he had plenty of confidence. He wouldn't have kept the negatives all those years if he didn't know they had value. But he would absolutely shrug and say, 'I was just taking pictures.'"



## Hartford's Preacher During the Revolution

Aaron Hutchinson, A. M., was born in March, 1722, in Gilead, CT. He graduated at Yale College in 1747 and married Margery Carter about 1750. He was pastor of a church in Grafton, MA from 1750-1772. He came to Pomfret, VT in 1774 and was hired by the towns of Woodstock, Pomfret, and Hartford to preach. He died in Pomfret in 1800.

He was a famous classical scholar, receiving honors from Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, and Princeton. He was also an ardent believer in physical as well as intellectual labor, and besides carrying on his farm and building his own house, did much to



*Rev. Aaron Hutchinson is buried in the Cushing Cemetery in Woodstock.*

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***Tradition recalls that he always wore a very large full wig and had a tremendous appetite.***

promote business interests in Pomfret. He always had a young man with him preparing for college, whom he taught while engaged in farm work. While the toiling clergyman held the plow, the pupil drove the oxen, the conversation about their occupations and other subjects being carried on in Greek and Latin.

Tradition recalls that he always wore a very large full wig and had a tremendous appetite. Mr. Hutchinson was not settled over the churches where he preached in Vermont, but was hired by the three towns named. The center and headquarters of his organization was a body at Woodstock, known and recognized as 'Mr. Hutchinson's Church,' which was the first religious society in that town, and was established and maintained by the personal effort of its pastor and without the aid of Ecclesiastical Council.

He had ten children, of whom Aaron, b. October 3, 1754, graduated at Harvard College in 1770, was a lawyer in Lebanon, NH, and d. in 1843; and Titus; b. April 29, 1771, graduated at Princeton in 1794, was a distinguished lawyer in Woodstock, VT being Chief Justice of Supreme Court 1830-1833, and d. August 24, 1857. Mr. Hutchinson is buried in one of the Pomfret cemeteries, near Woodstock, and his tombstone has the following inscription.

### **REV. AARON HUTCHINSON**

Here lie his relics,  
Died Sept. 27, 1800,  
In the 79th year of his age,  
And the 50th of his ministry.  
His days he passed in health,  
Religion and domestic virtue,  
Nor did his sun of life  
Go down till night.  
Go, Traveller, follow his pious footsteps.

*Biographical Sketch of the Rev. Aaron Hutchinson, A.M., of Pomfret. Vermont by Rush C. Hawkins, New York: 1880.*



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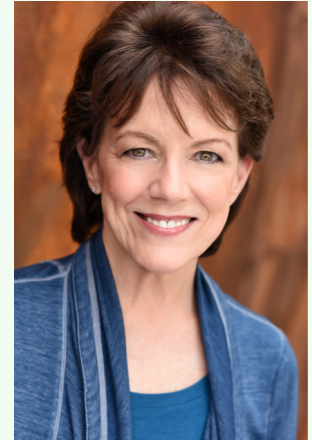


## Hartford Historical Society Presents "Siri," July 20

Don't miss this important and exciting benefit performance and talk by Susan Cameron Bennett on Friday evening July 20, 2018, at 6 p.m. at the Engine House, South Main Street, White River Junction, VT. Proceeds will benefit the Hartford Historical Society.

It will be a fun and musical evening with Susan, original voice of Siri, performing with guitarist husband, Rick Hinkle. Susan will speak about her experiences as a voice actor and singer. She was born in Burlington, Vermont, with family roots in White River Junction. The evening includes heavy hors d'oeuvres with cash bar starting at 6 p.m. followed by Susan's presentation and music selections by Susan and Rick. Afterwards there will be an opportunity to meet and greet the performers.

Tickets are \$50 each, only available online at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com). Just type in "Siri" under event. There are only 150 tickets available and there is a small additional service charge. If you have questions please contact Judy Barwood at 802/295-2435, [jbarwood@together.net](mailto:jbarwood@together.net) or the Hartford Historical Society at 802/296-3132 or [info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com).



## Board Member Judy Barwood Makes Local History Cool!

One of our Board Members, Judy Barwood, donates her time visiting schools to teach children about Hartford, VT history. Here are some letters from those children thanking her for making local history (including fires, train wrecks, and a really cool circus) interesting.

Thank you, Judy!



Dear Judy,  
I really appreciate you coming in to teach the third grade about the rich history of Hartford. The Kiddos really enjoyed your visit and they certainly learned a lot. Next school year, we will make it to the Historical Society. Thank you so much! Have a wonderful summer.  
Kristen Crynsa

Dear Judy,  
It was kind of you to volunteer your time to teach us about the history of Hartford. When you taught us about the train wreck, I learned a lot. I didn't even know of any train wrecks! I just got the idea to write a realistic fiction book about a person on the train. It was also interesting that there were 19 schools now there are only 3! Thank you for coming. I learned a lot from what you taught!

I thought Deadman's curve and the big train wreck was interesting!  
I also liked your big posters with lots of interesting pictures.



## Hartford Historical Society

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**Don & Sue Foster**

### HHS Calendar

#### **OPEN HOUSE at the Garipay House**

July through September, the Garipay House Museum will be open to the public Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or by appointment. During those months, it will be open the second Sunday from 2-4 p.m. Look for the flag or contact us at 802/296-3132.

**MONTHLY MEETINGS** are open to the public on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Garipay House, 6:30 p.m. (please check for exact date)

**Saturday, June 30, 2018** – Annual Yard Sale at the Garipay House is canceled.

**Friday, July 20, 2018** – An Evening with ‘Siri’ at the Freight House in White River Junction. Tickets are \$50 per person and include appetizers. Siri will discuss her unique career, her family connection to Hartford, and give a concert. Song requests will be welcomed.

**Saturday, August 11, 2018** – Ice Cream Social. In partnership with the Hartford Library from 1-4 p.m. at the Garipay House.

**Sunday, August 12, 2018** – Sharon Rest Area Fundraiser. Baked goods and other snack items needed along with volunteers to staff the refreshment table.

**July-August - Bugbee History Hour.** Fourth Wednesday at the Bugbee Senior Center in the library, 1-2 p.m.

**July, August, and September** – Summer Open House. Second Sunday at the Garipay House, 2-4 p.m.

**Wednesday, September 12, 2018** – "Growing Up and Growing Old in the Upper Valley Region," presented by Stephen Taylor, 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village. Refreshments.

The **Genealogy Center** in the Hartford Library is open Tuesday afternoons from 1-3 p.m.. Mary Ann Devins will be happy to assist you in exploring the resources we have and in accessing information from *The Landmark*, which we have on microfiche. Just call the library to set it up.