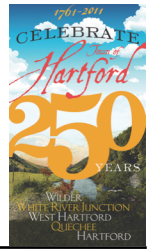




Hartford Historical Society

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

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



Volume 32, No. 3

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July-August 2019

The Mystery of Unmarked Abenaki Graves in Hartford

By Scott Fletcher

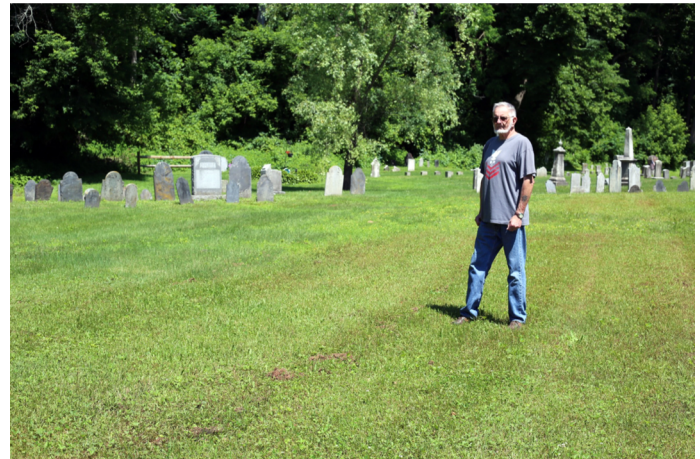
Bob Hebert has been exploring the old cemetery on South Main Street in White River Junction since he was a kid living in the former Catholic Church that his grandfather bought from Saint Anthony's parish in 1899 and converted to an apartment building. "My sister and I used to camp out there," he says.

Today, Bob and his wife live in an apartment in the back of the same house and Bob continues to mow the cemetery and fix headstones as he has for years. His parents and sister rest in a corner of the cemetery next to the last two vacant plots, which Bob and his wife purchased for themselves.

Father Magloire Pigeon purchased the property adjacent to the old cemetery from Henry J. Moseley in 1870. He converted one existing house into a chapel and used another as a rectory. In 1875, Father Pigeon added a one-room schoolhouse.

The oldest headstones are at the base of the hill a bit south of the church buildings and, over the years, new graves were added in-between. Catholics were buried near the church and there is a Protestant section beyond. In 1878, the church purchased the hill behind the property and created two terraces for additional graves. Today, these plots are mostly overgrown.

Bob's grandfather converted the schoolhouse to a garage long ago. Next to the garage is a workshop that his grandfather built and where he operated a lumber



Bob Hebert's grandmother told him that Native American remains were buried in the old cemetery on South Main Street in White River Junction after being discovered by railroad workers. The cemetery is considered full even though there are no headstones in one corner. There are no records of the burials.

and coal business. Bob still uses his grandfather's shop for woodworking and sharpening mower blades.

Bob recently led me from his house to the southeast corner of the cemetery where he says there have never been headstones. It's not a large area--maybe forty feet square.

Continued on page 11.



One Room Schoolhouses

Presented by Steve Taylor

7 p.m. Wednesday, September 11, 2019, at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ in Hartford Village. Refreshments.

From the Editor . . .

You might not recognize the rear of the Garipay House where volunteers from Cover Home Repair built a ramp to make the first floor



accessible to people with disabilities. This long-awaited project was coordinated by society members Judy Barwood, Peggy McDerment, Pat Stark, and Gaylord Newcity.

Many Native American artifacts have been found in the town of Hartford, but human remains have never been documented. In this issue, Bob Hebert shares a family tradition concerning a burial ground that may

have been discovered when the railroads came to town in the late 1840s. We hope to share some light on this mystery.

And we will also turn our spotlight on the old Hartford Fire Station that began protecting the town in 1893. Owner David Fairbanks Ford maintains the building and keeps it a lively part of the community.

And of course you'll want to know about our recent program on Louis Sheldon Newton and the society's ongoing education programs for local schools.

We welcome suggestions and corrections. Perhaps you have a historical tidbit or family story. Please let us know!

Finally, sincere thanks to those who have used our PayPal form at hartfordhistory.org to renew memberships and make donations. We appreciate your support!

Scott Fletcher, Editor

Hartford Notes

- It is related of Hartford pioneer Elias Lyman that he, on a certain time, desired to send \$1,000 in money to Boston, and adopted a novel method of sending it. Wishing at the same time to send some clover seed to Boston he enclosed the money in a bag of seed, and sent it forward by a two-horse team as freight. The team was on the road eight days, but reached Boston safely and then, for the first time, the teamsters learned the nature and value of his load. (*History of Hartford*, W.H. Tucker.)

- In the summer of 1847, a flatboat carried a steam locomotive called the Abigail Adams up the Connecticut River to Samuel Nutt's wharf near what is now Nutt Lane in White River Junction. A team of horses pulled the engine ashore where it was used by the Central Vermont Railroad to lay tracks along the White River to Bethel.

- In 1832, the Second Congregational Church of Hartford used three cords of wood for heating. It was delivered and stacked for \$1.30 a cord.



Hartford Historical Society

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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.

June Program Featured Tour of Buildings Designed By Hartford's Louis Sheldon Newton

The tour was led by Martha Knapp who first discovered Louis Sheldon Newton (1871-1953) in a booklet called, *The Gateway of Vermont, Hartford and Its Villages*. That booklet, written in 1903, listed all of the buildings he designed, which sometimes included furnishings. Newton designed numerous buildings in the Upper Valley as well as a considerable number elsewhere. The booklet included a photograph of a very handsome Mr. Newton.

Knapp began investigating every building listed and declared that she became a stalker because she found that they were all still in existence, very beautiful, and very much treasured and utilized by their current owners.

Newton was born in the original log cabin in the Jericho area built by his great-grandfather David Newton in 1777. David Newton was one of Hartford's first settlers. He married Mary Hazen and they had 16 children. Louis was named after his grandfather Sheldon, one of the original 16, and the Newton family has one of the most complete genealogical histories in the country—if not the world. It can be found in the National Archives in Washington D.C. and the Newton family still works on it.

Louis Sheldon Newton attended Hartford Schools until grade 8. Then he went to St. Johnsbury Academy for three years and moved to Boston to work with the architectural firm of J. Merrill Brown to further his chosen career. He also took other classes and was especially interested in the Georgian and Colonial Revival modes.

Newton's home and very busy office were in Hartford Village. His first commission was the Cone House renovation. He made renovations to many other buildings in the village including the Governor Pingree House and the Congregational Church.

The Wilder Club and Library, the Tip Top Building, the White River Savings Bank, and the grandstand and judges stands for the fairgrounds were all designed by Newton in the town of Hartford.

Knapp took us to Lebanon, Enfield, and Canaan, NH to find more buildings and homes. Woodstock, Vermont had four of his most gorgeous and impressive designs completed in 1899. Windsor had one renovation, the Old Constitution House, for which Senator Evarts donated funds and land. He also hired Newton to update the design of the historic building.

Hanover, NH has the Occom Ridge mansions that Newton designed for Dartmouth College to house faculty and staff. Today, these homes continue to look down on both the campus and the Connecticut River. Two are currently listed for over \$2 million. The Bridgeman building and other homes designed by Newton also still exist in Hanover.

Knapp has yet to complete volume II of Newton's career when he moved to Burlington at age 50. He was hired by the University of Vermont to convert Robinson Hall and Redstone Hall into dormitories for students. He also designed a prefabricated house for Sears and Roebuck called the Abraham House which still exists.

Lyndonville, VT, the home of Lyndon State College, began as a huge estate for Theodore Newton Vail, the wealthy owner of Ma Bell when it was still a monopoly. He hired Newton to do many extravagant and beautiful buildings on his vast property. Newton also designed the furnishings for the estate. Years later, Vail moved to the city and gave all of his land and buildings to what would become the college.

Louis Sheldon Newton was a huge boon to the Vermont economy. He created many skilled jobs and always hired contractors and artisans who were up to his standards.

Knapp shared this quote about Newton written by Hiram Carlton in 1903. "Memory of the public and private buildings in various sections of New England are monuments to his proficiency and skills."

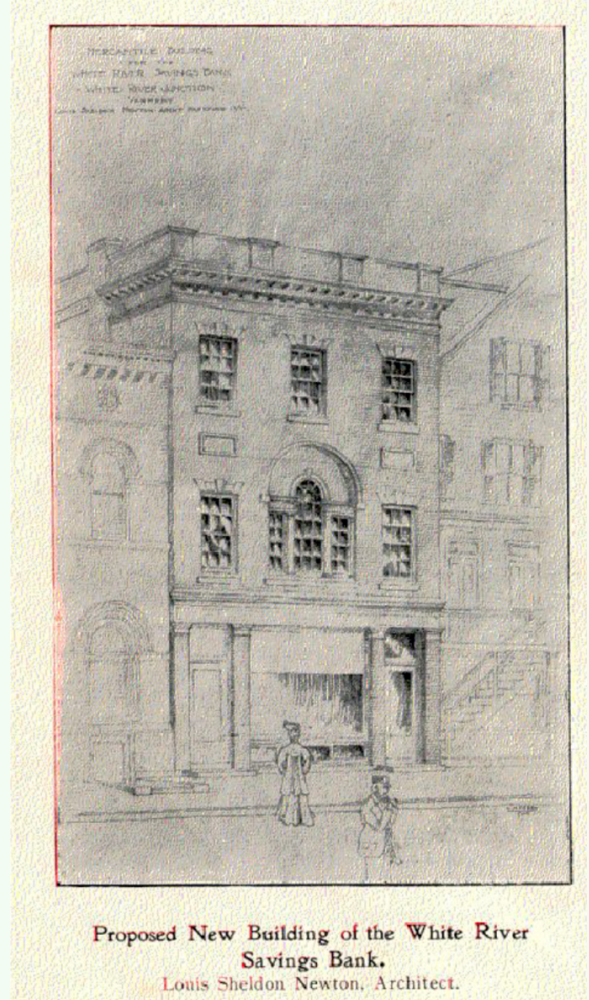
She then closed her talk by comparing Louis Sheldon Newton with Augustus Saint-Gaudens. They both left beautiful monuments that are enjoyed by generations to come.



Martha Knapp has located buildings by Louis Sheldon Newton throughout the Upper Valley.

Louis Sheldon Newton continued from page 3.

The Wilder Club and Library, the Tip Top Building, the White River Savings Bank, and the grandstand and judges stands at the fairgrounds were all designed by Louis Sheldon Newton in the town of Hartford.



Hartford Third Graders Visit Garipay House

By Mary Nadeau

Several years ago, Martha Knapp, the Hartford Historical Society's premier authority on the history and culture of Vermont's indigenous people, initiated visits to area schools with the goal of sharing her knowledge with our community's young students. Subsequently it was determined that the experience would be more meaningful if they could visit the Garipay House Museum to see for themselves the Society's impressive collection. For the past several years, groups of third graders from the Dothan Brook and Ottauquechee Elementary Schools have arrived via school bus for field trips that cover both the history of the Native Americans who have lived in this area for thousands of years and of the history of the Town of Hartford since it was chartered in 1761.

This year, I again partnered with Martha to conduct tours of the museum. She covered the exhibits and treasures on the main floor, while I brought them upstairs to see Dr. Garipay's former medical office and then down into the basement where additional historical treasures are on display.

After the students had departed, Martha and I compared notes to determine what items seemed to draw the most interest. From her observations, the students appeared to be particularly captivated by the Colonial-era muskets once owned by the original settlers of Hartford, the antique cash register (capable of performing many functions done by today's computer-driven cash registers), the ancient school desks rescued from a rural neighborhood one-room school house, and the knitted American flag bearing fifteen stars and fifteen stripes. This was the official design of our country's flag after Vermont and Kentucky were admitted to the Union. It was used for 23 years and flew over Fort McHenry during the War of 1812, inspiring Frances Scott Key to pen the words that would later become our national anthem.

The furnishings in Dr. Garipay's office piqued their curiosity. They marveled at his hand-cranked adding machine, the doctor's official "little black bag," a



Martha Knapp delivers her talk to an attentive group of third graders amid displays of Abenaki artifacts.

wheel of rubber stamps, the display of Early- and Mid-Twentieth Century medical instruments, the metal crutches with arm clasps that were used by victims of polio and even the wall-mounted black dial phone beside the doctor's desk.

They listened attentively as I held up the doctor's quarantine signs and explained that they were placed in the front windows of homes when family members became afflicted with highly communicable diseases such as measles, whooping cough, polio and small

Continued on page 8.



The 1918 Department with the Garford Truck - First piece of Mo

Firehouse Still a Focal Point in Hartford History

By Scott Fletcher

On the morning of January 20, 1886, a fire in Hartford Village destroyed the Moore and Madden gristmill, a box factory owned by Zerah B. Clarke, and the carriage and blacksmith shop of Jonathan Bugbee. Other conflagrations over the years include the Lyman woolen mill in 1835, the Sturtevant woolen mill in 1848, the office of the *White River Advertiser* in 1853, the Junction House in 1878, the Smith Cracker Company in 1884, the Masonic hall in 1889, and the Hotel Coolidge in 1925. The White River Junction train station burned multiple times starting in 1861.

After years of brave and diligent effort by volunteer firefighters, Hartford residents petitioned the select board and a firehouse was erected in 1893. David Fairbanks Ford has owned the old building since 2003. It had stood vacant, except for pigeons and raccoons, since Hartford opened the current fire and police complex on VA Cutoff Road in 1978. "I was not planning to own a firehouse," says Ford, "I was just in the right place at the right time."

Ford says that one supporter of the first firehouse was George Smith whose cracker company next door had burned more than once. Owners of other prosperous firms were also anxious to protect their properties. So a fire district was formed and a one-and-a-half story barn-like building with a tower for drying hoses was erected on Bridge Street by the White River.

The old building has been enlarged and remodeled several times over the years. In 1913, a concrete foundation was poured and the building was raised four feet to make the basement more functional and align the front of the building with a new iron bridge across the White River. Sliding doors installed on the side and rear of the new basement allowed for more storage of wagons and supplies.

Although parts of the lower level still look like a barn, Ford has found no evidence that firemen kept horses there. "I think they kept the horses at stables behind the Smith Cracker Company," he says. "You can still see the word 'Stable' on one of the walls



The Hartford Fire Department proudly displayed its Garford pumper truck in front of the recently enlarged firehouse in 1918. This was the town's first mechanized fire vehicle. A hose cart rests in the background.

behind the Tip Top Building.”

In 1918, an upper floor was added that had five apartments for firemen and a kitchen where they took turns making meals. One early fireman was well

Firemen used a steam generator to raise hoses to the top of the tower where they stretched five and a half stories to the basement.

known for barely-digestible, “grease burgers.”

This may have been the period when a steam-driven pulley system was installed to hoist wet cotton hoses to the top of the

tower where they stretched five and a half stories to the basement.

When the alarm whistle blew, firemen came down a flight of stairs in the front corner of the station. There is no sign of a fire pole. Ford says that each street in Hartford was assigned its own series of long and short whistle bursts so that the alarm identified the location of the fire.

Over the years, floods accompanied the fires in Hartford. The building has been flooded several times, most recently in 2012 by Tropical Storm Irene. The foundation of the firehouse had to be rebuilt after the flood of 1927 when the White River carried away the firehouse parking lot and tore the bridge from its mooring on the opposite shore.

David Fairbanks Ford is a patient curator of the old building. He has updated the building’s aging mechanical systems and restored features like woodwork, hardware, and floors. He has preserved the recreation room downstairs where firemen played cards and listened to music, and the firehouse entry features a display of original timbers, moldings, and faux brick panels from the exterior.

Ford studies the building’s history and has met several of Hartford’s former fire captains. He displays a variety of firefighting artifacts, and hopes to establish regular visiting hours. The old firehouse is currently open for special events, and information is available on the Hartford Main Street Museum website.

pox. With one of these signs displayed in the window of a home, nobody could enter or leave, so food and other necessities had to be delivered to the unfortunate families within. These third graders couldn't imagine going to a doctor's home for treatment, and the idea of having a doctor making house calls amazed them, yet Dr. Garipay did both.

As we toured the basement and viewed the railroad memorabilia, I was pleasantly surprised that they had already learned about the Great Hartford Train Wreck of 1887 and that their teachers had brought them to visit the site on Route 14, just beyond Hartford Village. They had also seen Old 494 near the Welcome Center, and they were surprised to see at eye level the immense size of the locomotive engine's original headlamp and the display of oversized tools that were used to oil and maintain it.

In the basement's larger display room, the students learned how to distinguish between spinning wheels used to produce woolen yarn and those used to spin flax fibers that would be used for the production of linen cloth. The huge barn loom, once employed to turn worn out clothing and other fabrics into heavy-duty rugs and blankets, provided me with the opportunity to emphasize the vital role that recycling played for Vermonters during earlier centuries.

Before leaving the basement, they asked if they could peek inside the enormous volumes of ledgers from former White River Junction banks, so one was

hauled down from a shelf and opened up for their inspection. The thought of bank employees hand writing out records of each transaction came as a surprise, and they were quite impressed by the skill and beauty of the penmanship. At this point, I learned that these third graders are being taught to write in Cursive, prompting me to give them and their teachers an enthusiastic cheer!

After the tours, Martha drew up a chair in front of the fireplace and the students gathered on the floor at her feet for an in-depth lesson on the history of Vermont's original population before the arrival of the European settlers. Martha included a list of Abenaki "inventions" that are still used today, such as snowshoes, toboggans and herbal remedies. The children were attentive, polite and asked many thoughtful questions.

Mona Bouthillier, one of our Historical Society members, has graciously knitted and donated hundreds of sets of hats and mittens over the past several years, and it has become our custom is to give each child who visits the museum the opportunity to pick out a set to keep. Even though we were blessed with warm spring weather, the students wore their gifts for the remainder of the morning!

Martha and I thoroughly enjoyed hosting these enthusiastic and well-behaved third graders, and we complement their parents and dedicated teachers for a job well done.

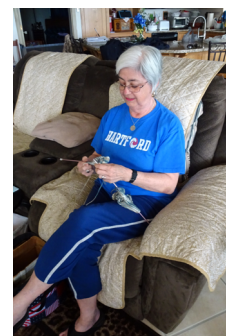
Meet Mona, the Society's Prolific Knitter! **By Mary Nadeau**

Mona Bouthillier, a long-time member of the Hartford Historical Society, loves to knit. To date, she has made and donated hundreds of hats and mittens in a wide variety of colors so that they can be offered to children who visit the Garipay House Museum, regardless of the time of year.

At the tender age of five, her first knitting project was a scarf made under her mother's tutelage. Mona has been joyfully knitting up a storm ever since. Over the years, she has made countless patterned sweaters, scarves, mittens, baby outfits and even a few large afghans. She always has a project in the works, and she always knits while watching sports programs on television, another of her favorite pastimes. A pair of mittens with a matching hat can be whipped up during a single baseball game, even though her eyes are glued to the screen much of the time!

In addition to knitting for the Society, Mona makes infant hats and donates them to Alice Peck Day and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. She also supplies the elementary school nurses with hats and mittens to hand out at their discretion to students who may need them.

Mona is always grateful for donations of yarn in any color or weight. Anyone wishing to help maintain her supply may leave their surplus yarn on the back porch of the Garipay House. Thank you!



Freegrace Leavitt Served Hartford as Deacon, Innkeeper, Clerk, Distiller, and Overseer of the Poor

Freegrace Leavitt married Jerusha Loomis in 1788 and had three children, Jerusha, Arabella, and Harvey. The family moved to Hartford from Hanover, New Hampshire in 1794 and took up residence in a stately home near the old Center of Town, which they called “Leavitt’s Inn.” The home still stands across from the site of Hartford’s first meetinghouse, which was built in 1783 and torn down in 1872. The society’s

During the War of 1812, Leavitt and Thomas King distilled potato whiskey in Leavitt’s barn. Whiskey was scarce and brought \$1.50 per gallon. Profits were handsome until the close of the war but, when peace was declared, the price of whiskey plunged to thirty-three cents per gallon and the venture ended. But the barn still stands.

collection includes an 1803 sampler by Arabella Leavitt. Freegrace Leavitt became a prominent member of the community and served for many years as an innkeeper, town clerk, distiller, deacon, and overseer of the poor. As deacon of the church, he announced hymns and

sounded the opening note on a pipe. Residents gathered at Leavitt’s Inn for refreshment after meetings and religious services. Freegrace Leavitt was elected town clerk in 1802 and served until 1836. In March 1809, he was named an overseer of the poor with Philemon Hazen and Elijah Mason. Leavitt hosted Hartford’s proprietor’s meetings from 1808 to 1819, and his home was the seat of town business until 1840.

During the War of 1812, Leavitt and Thomas King distilled potato whiskey in Leavitt’s barn. Whiskey was scarce and brought \$1.50 per gallon. Profits were handsome until the close of the war but, when peace was declared, the price of whiskey plunged to thirty-three cents per gallon and the venture ended. But the barn still stands.

For many years, the Leavitt Inn was famous for a large sign atop a 60-foot pole lamenting the fortunes of those traveling to Woodstock for justice at the Windsor

County Courthouse. Those going to Woodstock saw a drawing of a hale and hopeful traveler with the caption, “Going to court.” On the reverse was a sad and impoverished figure stating, “Been to court.”

When Hartford residents formed an association in Quechee Village in 1832 to build a new meetinghouse, Freegrace Leavitt signed the articles of association. The building, completed in 1833, housed the Quechee Congregational Church. Today it is the home of Meeting House Furniture Restoration.

One amenity in the Leavitt Inn was a clock that played six tunes including, “Yankee Doodle” and “Campbells are Comin’.” Each day, tunes played at 6 a.m., noon, and 6 p.m. kept meals punctual as favored by Mr. Leavitt.

Freegrace Leavitt died in 1843 and is buried in the earliest section of the Hartford Cemetery. His wife Jerusha moved to Vergennes to be near their son Harvey Freegrace Leavitt. When she died in 1846, her husband’s name was also added to her headstone in the Vergennes Burying Ground.



Freegrace and Jerusha Leavitt became prominent residents of Hartford after moving here from Hanover, NH in 1794. Their three children included popular preacher Harvey Freegrace Leavitt.

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THANK YOU!

“My grandmother always said that when the Boston and Maine Railroad came north, they ran into human remains near the Connecticut River somewhere near where the Luce farm is,” Bob tells me. “My grandmother said the railroad got permission to move the remains here.” Bob’s grandmother was part Abenaki and she believed the remains were as well.

There appears to be no evidence supporting this claim except that there are no headstones in one corner of a cemetery that is supposed to be full. St. Anthony’s Catholic Church has no record of these burials and neither does the town of Hartford. The graves are not mentioned by any Hartford historian.

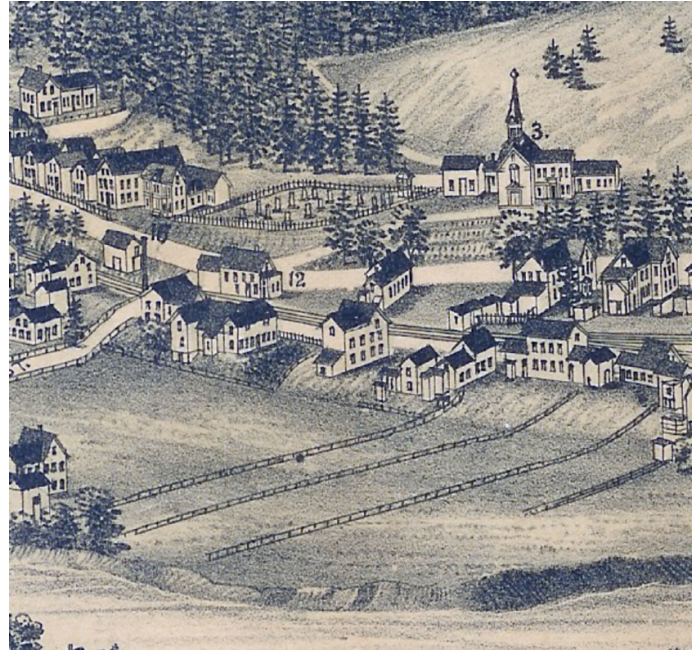
How did the ground remain unbroken over the years? Certainly, the area has been respected and preserved by generations of sextons at the cemetery.

The farm identified by Bob’s grandmother is just a short distance south of where South Main Street becomes Connecticut River Road. The first tracks came through from Windsor to White River Junction between 1846 and 1848. Today, there are several sets of tracks along that stretch of river and, as they enter White River Junction, they blossom into the many sidings of a bustling rail hub.

When these tracks were laid, much of the property between the old cemetery and the Connecticut River was owned by Colonel Samuel P. Nutt who piloted flatboats from White River Junction to Hartford, CT for many years. He had a home and wharf on the river near what is still called Nutt Lane.

Colonel Nutt was one of the first stockholders in the Central Vermont Railroad and would certainly have known if construction was delayed by the discovery of human remains. If this was the case, he may have been among the Hartford community leaders who discussed the options for moving the remains and completing the rail line. Perhaps the discovery of Native American remains was common knowledge in Hartford.

Without new evidence, this mystery will never be solved but there is one more intriguing clue. When he died in 1871, Colonel Nutt was buried in the old cemetery and his prominent headstone is very near the vacant corner.



The 1889 lithograph at top shows St. Anthony’s Catholic Church before the current building opened ten years later. The view across the Catholic section of the old South End Cemetery shows, from left, the former one-room schoolhouse, the former church, and the workshop where Bob Hebert’s grandfather operated Adams Oil and Lumber in the early 1900s.

Editor’s Note: Hartford is rich in Abenaki artifacts and traditions, and Native American history is an important part of the historical society’s educational outreach program. Visitors to the Garipay House can learn more about Native Americans in Hartford by viewing a number of Abenaki artifacts and displays. The society also has reports documenting local digs by state archaeologists during which evidence of Native Americans was found.

Hartford Historical Society

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HHS Calendar

During summer months, THE GARIPAY HOUSE MUSEUM will be open on the second Sunday of the month from 1-4 p.m., or when the flag is flying on Tuesday or Friday, or by appointment. For an appointment or donation, please call 802/296-3132.

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

Friday, July 19, 2019 – Vermont Trivia Night at the Hartford Library, 1587 Maple Street, 7 p.m. This is the third Vermont Trivia Event using a kit from the Vermont Historical Society. Participants will try to answer questions on Vermont history as well as Hartford History to win great Vermont-themed and Hartford history themed prizes. Refreshments will be provided. This is co-sponsored by the Hartford Library and the Hartford Historical Society.

Saturday, August 17, 2019 – The Annual Ice Cream Social at the Garipay House, 1-4 p.m. Come and enjoy a wonderful inter-generational 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. This will also be the ending party for the Hartford Library's adult summer reading program. Prize winners will be announced. Parking is limited at the Historical Society and families are encouraged to park at the Hartford Library.

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 - "One Room Schoolhouses," presented by Steve Taylor. 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village. Refreshments.

The **Genealogy Center** on the second floor of the Hartford Library is open Fridays from 2-6 p.m. or by appointment. Please call Carole Haehnel at 802/295-3974. She will be happy to assist you in exploring the resources we have and in accessing information from *The Landmark*, which we have on microfiche.