



HARTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

• HARTFORD, VERMONT 05047 •

HARTFORD • QUECHEE • WEST HARTFORD
WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER

Volume 6, Issue 1 • SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • March 1993

March Meeting . . .

We have been invited by The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm to hold our meeting at the Inn. It is the 200th anniversary of the construction of the original portion of the Inn that was the home of Colonel Joseph Marsh. Deborah Doyle-Schechtman has been researching the history of the Farm, and will speak to us on:

Field and Plow; Home and Hearth: A Brief History of the Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm.

The Meeting will be

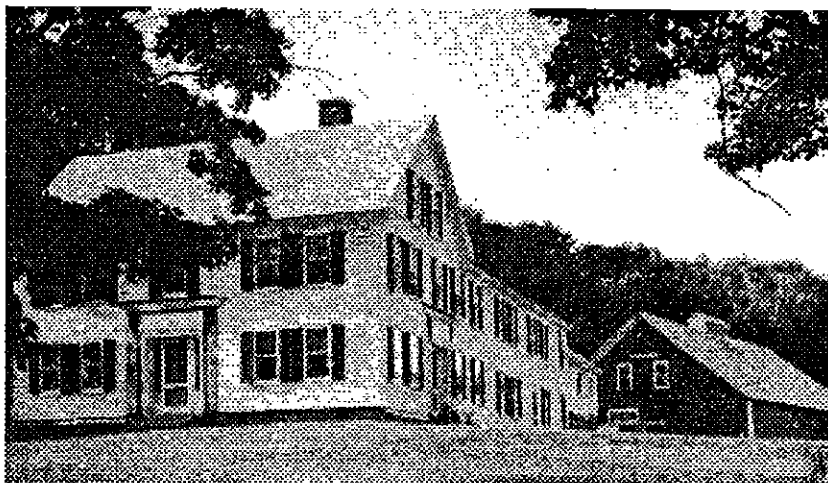
Wednesday, March 10, 7:00 PM

at The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm
Clubhouse Road, Quechee

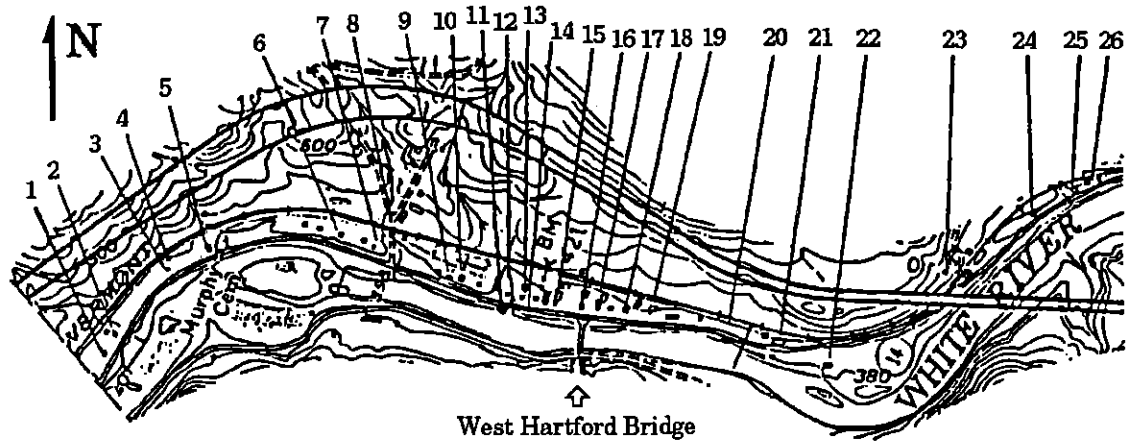
Space is limited, so please call Priscilla Gadzinski (295-2364) or Bob Plattner (457-4271) by Saturday, March 6 so we may let our host, The Inn, know how many to expect. Mention also if you need or can provide transportation.

*Marshland, Home of
Col. Joseph Marsh, First
Lieutenant Governor of
Vermont and also the
grandfather of
George Perkins Marsh,
father of the American
ecological movement.
House was built in 1793.*

*Photo from Historical
Highlights of Hartford, VT,
John W. St. Croix*



Tune into Radio WNHV for meeting cancellations due to weather.



A Look Down Hartford's Main Streets

WEST HARTFORD

by Cameron Clifford

West Hartford Village has undergone many changes from a thriving business community in the late 1800's to the residential area it is today. If you take a walk along West Hartford's two mile Main Street to the Sharon town line, you will probably get the impression of a has-been village. This is the fallacy of just going on looks and impression when trying to understand something such as what has existed along a main street. It is like looking at the cover of a book and calling it read. In West Hartford's case, you would almost totally miss the early agricultural origins, not fully see what the village once consisted of, and probably not even look at the suburban type houses because they are so familiar.

PART II
of a
5-Part Series:



Main Street, West Hartford, Vermont

Photos of West Hartford from our collection, gifts of Mrs. Albert Young and Herbert Adams.

This explanation of what has existed along West Hartford's Main Street since European settlement between the 1780s and 1990s should be helpful in understanding the history of West Hartford as you walk or drive along its Main Street.

In the 1700s basically nothing existed but trees and a trail running along the White River from the Connecticut River into Sharon and beyond. At this time the area of West Hartford was owned in common by the sons and daughters of Thomas Hazen who died in 1782. Hazen had deeded his children 1,560 acres in this part of town. He had received this parcel for services rendered the proprietors of Hartford in an effort to confirm Hartford's charter by New York authorities in the 1770s.



Hotel, West Hartford, Vermont

(25), the Hazen house (23) - though in a different location, a farmhouse in the lot north of Jim Fielder's Truck garage (20), a house where the West Hartford library stands (16), a house and sawmill where the Cleland lot is (7), and the still existing substantial two story house now owned by the Hoopers (5). All these places had a barn and possibly other out-buildings conducive to the operation of a farm, such as sheds and pig sties, located nearby. The Village as such began after the mid 1810s with John D. Hazen's subdivisions and later sale of his farm (including the area between "Rex Associates" (18) and Tiger Town Road (8). There also were subdivisions on Abel Camp's farm (2) (South of Rex Associates) and a part of the old Savage farm (5) (that part just immediately north of Tiger Town Road). Basically this involved the time period up into the early twentieth century and included all the houses now in existence along Main Street (excepting the suburban houses) and a lot of houses and businesses that are no longer in existence. The only vestige of business from that period left is the store (15) which is still in operation, though serving a different function compared to the three stores that were in existence in the 1850s.

By the 1850s the early business pursuits of making cider brandy (14), dealing in potash (17), and manufacturing iron plows (11) had given way to more service oriented businesses such as retailing ready made goods. Also, the catering of specific farm needs such as blacksmithing (11) gained new importance once the village became a new market center with the coming of the railroad in 1849.

The surviving Hazen children proceeded to have the area surveyed and plotted out into saleable lots. Through the next three decades there were sales of these lots to those interested in establishing farms, including junior members of the Hazen family itself. By 1815, there were six farms stretched out along the mile section of the White River Turnpike where the informal trail once was.

These farms included probably an early house where the Wilburs live

continued . . .

A Look Down Hartford's Main Streets *(continued)*

Between the 1850s and the 1930s, West Hartford's businesses transformed again: a tavern became a hotel (14) and agricultural readjustment towards dairying made the creation of a creamery (12) and a feed store (13) possible. What sustained the village was agriculture; area farmers depending on goods and services located nearby in West Hartford Village.

West Hartford as a real functioning village began to decline with the advent of the automobile. Trucks could pick up the farmers' cream instead of the farmer having to bring the cream to the village. The acquisition of automobiles spelled more freedom of mobility and choice for area farmers - and the death of West Hartford as a functioning village.

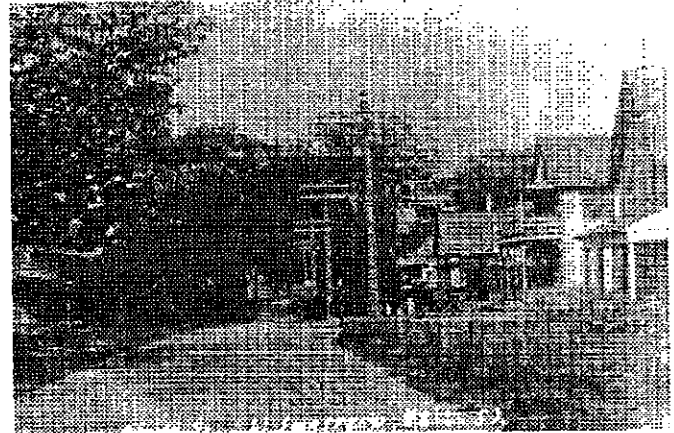
Since the 1920s businesses have come into existence in West Hartford, but all a product of automobile and not a part of a village's former function to service families in the immediate area. Such were a pet food processing plant (12), a tourist gift shop (24), and a host of garages (18) (21) (26).

The suburban houses which have come about since the decline of the village structure have included the

"ranch" type — Clifford (22), Hebert (19), Rivard (10), Hood (6), Fellow (2), and Conrad (1) homes, the two "manufactured" Wallace homes (3) (4) and the "cape" now owned by the Hoffmans (9). These all reflect the continuing change West Hartford has always gone through: creation, replacement, and subdivision. The Clifford and Rivard houses were created as an extension of the other residences existing on each of the lots, the Rivard house for family, the Clifford house for business. The Hebert and Hood houses replaced old and destroyed former village houses. The Fellows, Conrad, and the two Wallace houses all came about through subdivision of the rest of the old Savage farm. These houses also reflect the fact that their occupants made their living from a non-farm, non-village oriented income through being able to commute to work. This is also certainly not unique to just the new suburban houses; former farm houses, village houses and business structures converted to living spaces all presently house people who commute.

Main Street, West Hartford is at this stage now: a suburban era in which a few new buildings have been built, many changes in uses of existing ones has occurred, and the neglect and disappearance of those of little use is ongoing. It takes more than just looking through to see it.

Cameron Clifford, a member of the Society, lives and writes in West Hartford



Main Street, West Hartford, Vermont

The Humble Beginnings of a Historical Society

Laws of Vermont: Acts and Resolves of the legislature, 1848, Resolution # 62, Appropriating Certain Rooms for the Historical Society. Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives, That three rooms, no. 3, 35 and 36, *in the attic*, are hereby appropriated for the use of the Historical Society, and the Sergeant-at-Arm is directed to fit up said rooms, by placing temporary shelves therein, and also to procure a desk and cause it to be placed in the Library — the expense of fitting said rooms and of the desk, not to exceed the sum of thirty dollars. (No chair?) (*italics ours.*)

Hartford Born, But Destined to Roam

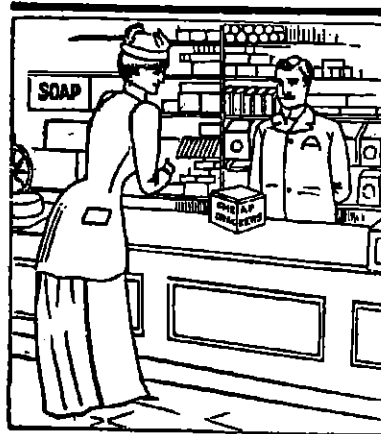
Ira Carter Tracey, born in Hartford, Vt 1806 "Second missionary of the American Board in China and the first of that board to baptize (a Chinese) in the Christian faith. Long a preacher in the Chinese language."

Henry Ferdinand Merrill, born in Hartford, Vt 1853 "In Chinese Customs Service, 1874-1914. Commissioner of Customs of China, 1892-1897 Delegate on important missions from China to all parts of the world."

William Babcock Hazen, born Hartford, VT 1830 "Author, Brigadier-General in Civil War and military attache in Europe during the Franco-Prussian and Russo-Turkish Wars."

from: VERMONTERS, by Dorman B. E. Kent. Published by the Vermont Historical Society, 1937

Commerce Along the White River . . .



---That is to say: Don't be tempted
to buy
inferior
Crackers.

Ask for
"HANOVERS"
and let no solicitation or explanation induce you to
take a substitute.

Geo. W. Smith,

DON'T BE TEMPTED

White River Junction, Vt.

Creating Brand Awareness, 101 years ago! — March 5, 1892

Recent Gifts

The Society thanks the following individuals for their recent gifts:

Bessie Brigham, Tri-Sigma Cook Book, pub. 1925 White River Jct.

Richard Steward, items from the Mira W. Davis estate.

Loretta Garipay, 8 post cards and miscellaneous papers that belonged to her husband, Dr. Stanley Garipay.

Mildred Hill, archives of The World War Mothers Association.

William Luczyinski, clippings of the 1964 flood.

Robert Leavitt, clippings from 1890, 1891, 1892 *Granite State Free Press*; booklet from First National Bank.

Pat Stark, 1992 Hartford Woman's Club Cook Book.

Fred Bradley, Souvenir Christmas Ball, with picture of Hartford Library.

Muriel Colbeck, items from The Valley Bank.

Purchased by the Society:

45 issues from 1943 of *The Landmark*, to fill in our collection.

We note with regret the passing of our member Pauline Cole of Quechee, who died 14 December, 1992.

West Hartford items from our collection are on display in our case in the foyer in the Municipal Building until March 20.



*Is this also an early photo of Marshland?
Please confirm or disprove.*

HARTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Office: Room 110, Municipal Building, White River Jct., VT 05001

Hours: By Appointment

Priscilla Gadzinski, *President*, 295-2364 • Mary Nadeau, *Vice President*, 295-2123

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of March, May, September and November at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, Route 14 in Hartford

Tune into Radio WNHV for meeting cancellations due to weather.