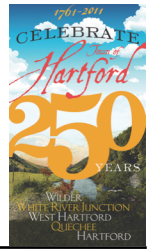




Hartford Historical Society

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

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



Volume 30, No. 3

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May-June 2017

Women's Organizations Connected with the Hartford Library, Part 2

By Mary Nadeau

The newly-built Hartford Library was dedicated in 1893. That same year, Kate Morris Cone, daughter of Ephraim Morris, who donated the funds to build the library, formed the Ladies' Reading Club. It offered local women opportunities for educational and cultural growth, and Kate was described as the club's "guiding light."

However, the winds of change saw the club reorganized in 1915, when members made the decision to become affiliated with the Vermont Federation of Women's Clubs, a branch of the national General Federation of Women's Clubs. The new organization was named The Hartford Woman's Club. The following was extracted from the minutes of club meetings spanning several decades:

The emphasis of the new Hartford Woman's Club changed from literature, culture and the fine arts to civic consciousness and local concerns, such as the unsightly automobile graveyard on the bank of the river at the east end of the village, and a roadside beautification committee was quickly formed. Members were encouraged to take more interest in



The Hartford Library was built on land donated by Horace Pease and built for \$10,000., which was donated by Ephraim Morris. The building was dedicated in 1893.

local government and to attend Town Meetings and to express their opinions. (Nationally women weren't enfranchised until 1920, but does anyone recall if they were allowed to vote at Hartford Town Meetings?) When the U.S. became involved in World War I, the club experienced a brief hiatus as members became involved in the Red Cross and war-related projects. It resumed after the armistice was signed.

Continued on page 4.



Vermont Folk Songs

An evening of music and history with Dick McCormack

Wednesday, June 14, 2017, 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ in Hartford Village. Free and open to the general public. Handicapped accessible. Please see page five for more on this special program.

From the Chair . . .



Our annual business meeting/social gathering is just around the corner. This year's event will take place on Saturday, May 27, 2017, at the Garipay House, starting at 2 p.m. on the spacious back lawn.

Instead of the usual pot luck lunch, this year it will be a dessert pot luck with a prize for the tastiest entry. Don't cook desserts? Then just bring yourself and your sweet tooth. Being there is what counts most.

The business meeting portion of the afternoon will include brief annual reports from the Board Chairman, the Membership Chairman and the Treasurer, followed by a presentation by members of the Business Plan Committee, who have been working tirelessly toward the goal of purchasing the former Elks Club property as our future home. You will have



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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.

an opportunity to share your thoughts about the Society's activities, past, present and future, to offer suggestions for the quarterly programs and to help with the biggest challenge of all, strategies for successful fundraising. Elections of board members will follow, and nominations from the floor are encouraged.

If you haven't toured the museum lately, step inside to view the most recent displays and acquisitions. There is always something exciting going on inside the Garipay House. Plan to join us May 27 at 2 p.m.

The Society's annual yard sale will be held on Saturday and Sunday, July 8-9. Keep in mind that we can't accept electronics or clothing, and all donations should be clean and in salable condition. Items may be dropped off during the week before the sale. Look for further information in the next newsletter. By the way, volunteer workers are always needed!

Mary Nadeau, Chairman of the Board



Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

<http://www.hartfordhistory.org>

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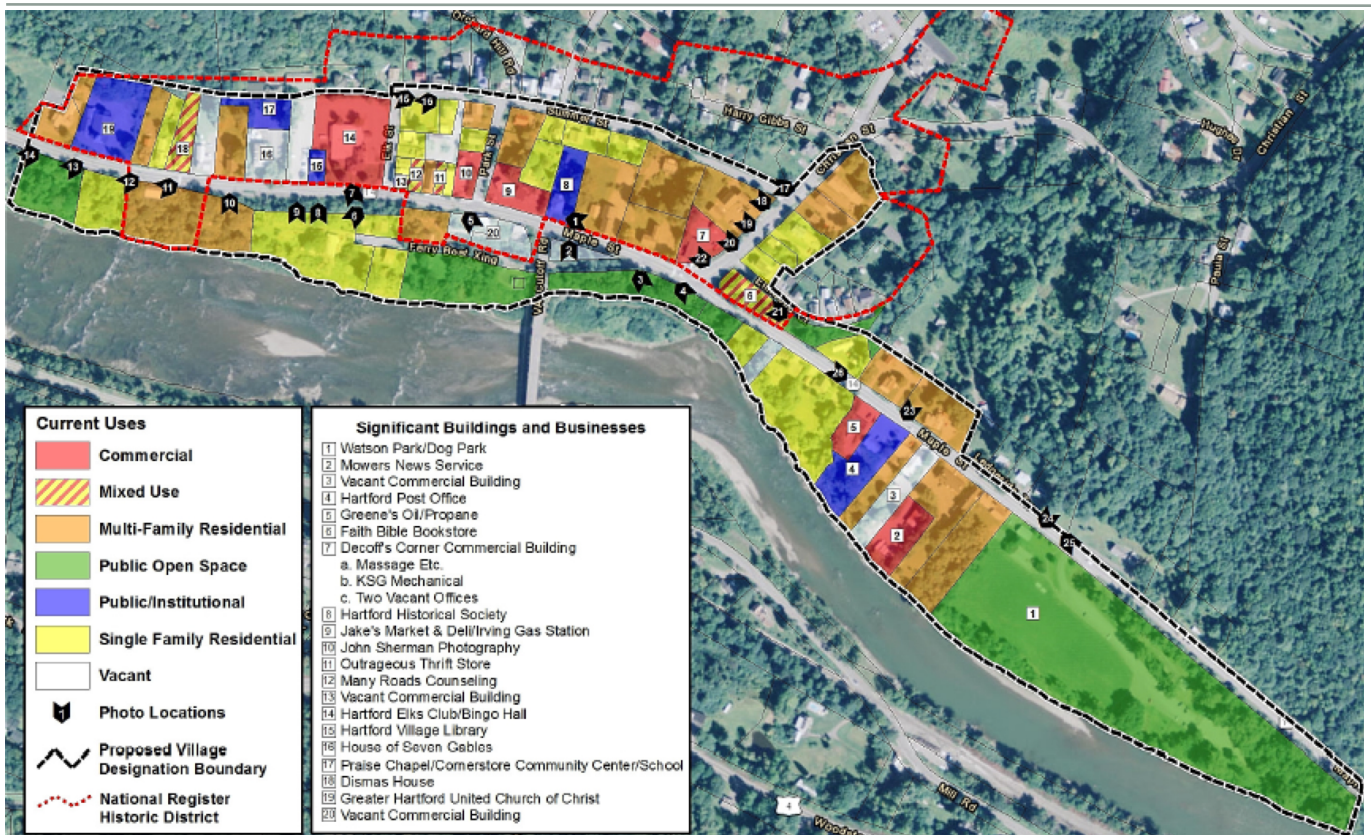
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Genealogist	Mary Ann Devins	802-281-0273



Hartford Village Receives Village Center Designation

On March 27, 2017 the Vermont Downtown Board approved a request for Village Center Designation for Hartford Village. The Village Center Designation program is a non-regulatory state program that provides benefits to communities for the purpose of revitalizing and sustaining villages and downtowns.

Commercial developers and income producing

The program provides benefits for the purpose of revitalizing and sustaining villages.

properties can receive tax credits for revitalization projects in these designated areas. Municipalities receive priority

consideration on some state grant programs.

This designation recognizes the historic importance of the village, encourages preservation, and identifies organizations and members of the community who will provide leadership with support from the Town of Hartford.

Matt Osborn, a Planner in the Town of Hartford, represented the Hartford Village Designation application along with Mary Nadeau and Roy Black of

the Hartford Historical Society. The project began in 2011 but was interrupted by Hurricane Irene.

The Village Plan developed by the community with assistance from Hartford staff focuses on calls for development in four areas.

Accessibility – The village should be easy to get to and move around in.

Comfortability – The village should be welcoming and you should want to spend time there.

Sociability – There should be a sense of connection between people in the community.

Activities – There should be a variety of things to do.

White River Junction became a Designated Downtown in 2006 and Quechee Village became a Designated Village Center in 2012. The Town will be pursuing Village Center Designation for Wilder Village and West Hartford Village in the coming year.

If you would like to know more about the Village Center designation and benefits, contact Matt Osborn at 295-3075 or mosborn@hartford-vt.org

The Hartford Village Center, above, encompasses commercial and residential buildings eligible for tax credits and municipal grants.

Meetings opened with the singing of the Federation Song, followed by music played on the Victrola (a record player that had to be hand cranked) as poems were read or patriotic songs sung. By 1921, current events were frequently discussed. Some of the topics included: the "terrible" earthquake that hit Oklahoma, the settlement of the Coal Strike, recognition of Mexico by the U.S. and the admission of the Irish Free State to the League of Nations. Meetings were held on a weekly basis, and membership hovered at around 50 women. On occasion, the Woman's Club hosted members of the Loyal Club and the Literary Club of White River Junction, and those invitations were reciprocated.

In 1929, the club went on record as favoring restrictions on roadside advertising.

December 14 that featured rope spinning by a Cherokee Indian attending Dartmouth, music by a jazz band and a talk by a Mr. Ray. In 1928, the Victrola was abandoned in favor of piano solos, duets and readings at regular meetings. In 1929, the club went on record as favoring restrictions on roadside advertising. (This was decades before the State of Vermont banned highway billboards!) The group also expressed its disapproval of having moving pictures shown at the theater in White River Junction on Sundays.

By 1930, the "automobile dump" problem had not been resolved, and the following year, the Committee on the Automobile Dump reported that the work had been accomplished by the State Legislature. "Mr. Carr was to have the grounds cleared by July 1 as a result of a petition by the Club." The group then refocused its attention on a large signboard by the Hartford cemetery. (Does anyone remember the message on that sign?)

Money to finance the club's activities was often raised through card parties or by raffling off homemade cakes. In 1931, with the Depression in full swing, a fund was established for the unemployed. In 1932, money was raised to purchase books for the library by asking members to bring "one penny for

each year of their ages" to the meetings. "The goodly sum of \$25 assured us it had been a success."

Also in 1932, a "committee was formed to look into the matter of bringing a better class of movies into our town." In another entry during that same year, "Toured the bakery from the supply room at the top down through the various interesting processes of bread making. It was an insight into 'a machine age' to see hundreds of loaves of bread mixed, kneaded, baked, sliced & wrapped by machinery. It seemed marvelous in its exactness and efficiency."

In 1935, the club "pushed for musical training in the schools" and sent a petition to the Town Clerk and School Board. Meetings often consisted of "culinary afternoons." Foods were sampled and recipes shared and copied.

By 1936, the club was meeting regularly in the homes of members, and the library was described as having "many needs." Each member was asked to contribute 35 cents for the Library Fund. Donations from the public were solicited with apparent results. In January of 1937, it was voted to take over the care of the Hartford Library. "Necessitated repairs on both the first and second floors to make the rooms presentable. These included repair to the stack room, ceiling plaster falling, electrical system dating back to 1893 inadequate for lighting the rooms and a dangerous fire hazard. All ceilings and side walls black with smoke and dirt, broken window panes and no water system." "Library project launched. It was thought to commence work at once, borrow the money and pay as we could." By February, the work was completed and \$35 remained in the trust fund. In March, donations continued to "roll in," including "a linoleum for the floor of the new kitchenette." One of the most significant improvements was the addition of a restroom on the first floor. The exterior of the building was painted, bringing the total expense to \$603.68.

In April, the Club held their meeting in the newly redecorated library. Mrs. Roland Stevens, who was Kate's younger sister Annie, composed a poem to mark the occasion:

*In the midst of the winter we charted our course
And sailed up a stream, far up to its source
We loaded the library onto our deck
To save it from being an absolute wreck*

To be continued next issue.

The Importance of Flax in Vermont

By Mary Nadeau

In her talk, “From Straw to Gold,” Susan Cain described the story of growing flax in Nineteenth Century Vermont. An incredible number of labor-intensive steps were required to transform the raw material into the golden fiber that eventually became linen cloth, the most widely used fabric in the region (cotton was prohibitively expensive).

Clad in period linen garments, Susan used her collection of antique implements to demonstrate some of the processes used to separate the vascular fibers from the plants, make them pliable, and eventually spin them into “thread” ready for the weaver’s loom.

Flax, a variety of grass that grows four to five feet in height, was commonly planted toward the end of April by farmers in Northern New England. Eleven weeks later in July, the plants were pulled and left to dry in an airy barn. Part

of the crop was left in the field to mature so that the seed could be harvested, some of which was saved to sow for the next crop the following spring, but with the bulk of it used to make linseed oil (used in the manufacture of paint).

The next step was to “ret” the plants. In October, they were taken out of the barn and spread

on the ground. The morning dew, followed by the hot afternoon sun, broke down the grass, literally rotting it. (Alternatively it could be put in still water). Either way, retting was a very “stinky” process. Afterward the plants were hung in the barn to dry again.

When the flax was cold and dry, workers would “break” it by pounding it in what might be described as a wooden machine resembling a paper cutter in order to get rid of everything except the plants’ sturdy vascular system. (The chaff by-product was used to stuff bedding.) This was followed by “scotching,” yet another beating with a wooden knife designed for this purpose. These steps further cleaned the fibers and rendered them soft and pliable, and we observed that the more they were “abused,” the softer and more pliable they became.

Finally it was pulled across a coarse carding tool that resembled a torture device with sharp metal spikes to remove more debris and begin to straighten and align the fibers. Next it was pulled through a second carder with finer spikes. At this point two-thirds to three quarters of the original plant material had been removed.

Using a flax spinning wheel, which is considerably smaller than the type used to produce woolen yarn, a “spinster” would guide the fibers through a twisting process that turned it into yard after yard of linen “thread.” This was done by a woman who didn’t have the responsibility of looking after children because of her youth or her advanced age. A spinster was, literally, one who spun, but eventually the term was used to describe a woman who never married.

Weaving was done on a large loom, usually by men. After the cloth was taken off the loom, it was boiled and bleached to whiten it. It could then be used to make everything from sheets, towels and napkins to articles of clothing, including underwear. Subsequently, the more the items were washed, the softer they became.

Linen is the oldest known cultivated fabric. Valued for its durability and lasting qualities, it survives long after wool or cotton cloth has disintegrated with age. Susan noted that the Egyptian mummies were wrapped in linen, and that ancient fabric has survived for 7,000 years!



Susan Cain described the process of preparing flax for “spinning” that turns it into linen thread. Photos by Chris McKinley.

The Untimely Death of “Doc” Hoffman

Compiled from contemporary sources by Mary Ann Devins

George W. “Doc” Hoffman (at right) was born in Brighton, Vermont in 1854. His parents were in very moderate circumstances and, beyond a common district school, he had to depend largely upon his own efforts to secure an education.

At sixteen, he secured employment on the railroad but the following year he was caught between two cars and injured. His physician advised him to quit railroading so he traveled west and became a telegraph operator at a frontier post in Sioux Indian country. He was personally acquainted with General George Armstrong Custer.

Becoming tired of frontier life, Hoffman returned home and entered school at Lyndon. At age 22, he began the study of dentistry. Sometime between 1870 and 1880, he



moved with his widowed mother to White River Junction where he married, practiced dentistry, and served as a Deputy Sheriff.

Hoffman was considered fearless and the *New York Times* reported that he single-handedly captured Frank Almy after the murder of Christie Warden in Hanover, New Hampshire in 1891. *The Interstate Journal and Advertiser* noted that, “he never knew what fear was.” He was also an avid horseman and served as Secretary of the Vermont State Fair Association and the Billings Park Association.

On April 24, 1900, Dustin and Frank Shaw, father and son, were in Windsor County Jail at Woodstock, Vermont, for various offenses such as killing of deer out of season, stealing an old harness, and

Dr. G.W. Hoffman

Dental Surgeon

White River Junction, Vermont

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Also to childrens' teeth

Artificial teeth inserted on Gold, Platinum, Celluloid and Rubber

All appointments by mail promptly attended to

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Dr. G.W. Hoffman, dentist, White River Junction. His office furniture and fixtures are of the finest in the State, and include an S.S. White Pedal Lever Chair, an electric engine and electric mallet for cleaning and filling teeth, a complete and first class laboratory and equipment. In fact Dr. Hoffman has spared neither pains nor expense in fitting up his establishment. Everything in and about his office is the very best, amounting to over \$3,000 in value, and he will warrant speedy and first class work. Give him a call.

From the Gazetteer and Business Directory of Windsor County.



Dustin and Frank Shaw escaped from the Woodstock Jail on April 24, 1900 using the time-honored bed sheet method.

general theft, which was never proved. These were hardly major crimes. Light sentences were expected.

Some three years before, it is stated, while in New York State, an officer attempted to arrest young Shaw for some minor offense when Shaw struck him on the head with a coupling pin and escaped.

The blow cracked the officer's skull, and he died some time afterward from the effects of it. The New York officers found that he was in Woodstock jail and, it is understood, were making arrangements for the removal, when the Shaws heard of it. In the early morning, the prisoners bent three bars in a third floor window in the hospital room, tied bed sheets together, dropped to the ground, and made their escape.

Sheriff Romaine Spafford of White River Junction was the first to hear of the escape. He went out with Deputy Paul Tinkham of Rochester and Constable Ed Putnam of Barnard and searched all day without result.

Soon, the fugitives were spotted in the Stoney Brook region armed with rifles and were quickly pursued by Sheriff Spafford, Deputy Sheriff Hoffman, Eugene Thomas, Constable Eugene Wilson of Stockbridge, Deputy Tinkham, and a friend of Tinkham's named Whittaker. They covered the Stoney Brook

neighborhood thoroughly making inquiry at every house and searching every outbuilding. Finding nothing, they went to Pittsfield and turned in.

Sheriff Spafford described the search. "On Friday, we made an early start getting off at about four in the morning. We were joined by Deputy Sheriff George Cheel of Rutland County and went toward Stockbridge Common. There, about three miles out, we split up. We had already been over some of the ground, but patiently and carefully we examined every house and outbuilding in the section.

"Suddenly, off to the right and up South Hill, shots were heard. It was only seven in the morning and we rightly judged that the shooting was worthy of some investigation.

"So we started up the mountain—Hoffman on the outside of the posse, nearest the clearing—I was

next, and the rest below. On the way up I occasionally saw Hoffman but saw none of the others. I had almost reached the top when I saw the track of a man in the snow. Further on were a few drops of blood. About a rod away, smoke was coming from a clump of spruces. Hoffman was about five rods away and I motioned to him. We couldn't reach the spot where we knew the men must be without skirting some dried-up tree tops, so we went about and came right up in front of the Shaws. They had us covered at once.

"Hello, boys,' said I, and the old man Shaw answered, 'Hello.' Young Shaw covered Hoffman, and the father had the bead on me. 'Hold on,' I said, 'We don't want any shooting,' and the father said, 'that's right,' and he told the young man to drop his gun, at the same time he lowered his own rifle to the earth, but did not let go of it.

"Drop your gun, Shaw,' said Dr. Hoffman, to the younger one, 'or I'll bore a hole through you.' Frank paid no heed to the remark, and Dr. Hoffman repeated it.

"Then Frank Shaw fired, hitting the doctor. 'My God,' said he, 'he's killed me. Don't leave me to die alone.' I fired at Frank Shaw immediately. He had turned about instantly as if to get away, but he turned back and blazed away at me. I know that I was excited and I guess he must have been, for we fired three shots apiece.

Continued on the next page.

"Doc" Hoffman continued.



"The Shaws ran down the mountain. Eugene Wilson of Stockbridge fired at them at thirty rods. This was the last seen or heard of them for twenty-four hours—until 7am Saturday morning when they turned up on the Brandon road and enquired the way to Brandon.

"Our associates reached the scene of the shooting in about fifteen minutes, and all of us picked poor Hoffman up and carried him a mile and a half to Charles Heff's place where he died at 8:45 o'clock that night. The fatal bullet entered to the left of the breast bone, bore down and came out over the left hip bone, just above the pocket. Dr. Hoffman wore his revolver in that pocket in a stiff and heavy leather case, and one may see the indentation of the ball, showing its force and fury."

The Shaws were at large for a week before being captured near Middlebury. They resisted arrest and 14 or 15 shots were exchanged before Frank Shaw fell with two bullet wounds and his father surrendered. Both prisoners were taken to the jail at Middlebury.

Frank Shaw was tried and convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to be hanged on the first Friday of February, 1903. In 1902, the General Assembly of the State of Vermont commuted his sentence to life imprisonment at hard labor at the State Prison.

The following is a report from the *Barre Evening Telegram*.

"George W. Hoffman, the brave deputy sheriff who was shot yesterday morning by Frank Shaw in the wilds of South Stockbridge died last night between 8 and 9 o'clock at the home of Charles Neff of Pittsfield. He was shot in the pit of the stomach, the bullet passing through the spleen, his left kidney and came out above his hip. Hoffman was about 42 years old and one of the bravest officers in Windsor County.

His wife reached his bedside before he died, but he never regained consciousness. Mrs. Hoffman had just buried her father, and the deepest sympathy of the community goes out to her in her deep affliction. He left his wife Carrie behind with two daughters, Helen, age 18 and Arabella who was 7, at the time of his death. He was 46 years old."

Dr. George W. Hoffman is buried in the Lyndon Center Cemetery, in Lyndon, Vermont where he spent his childhood.

From top, Sheriff Romaine Spafford carries Frank Shaw to the Sheriff's Office in White River Junction. Shaw asleep at the Sheriff's Office. Residents watch as Frank Shaw is taken to the train for his return to Woodstock.

June Program to Feature Vermont Folk Songs

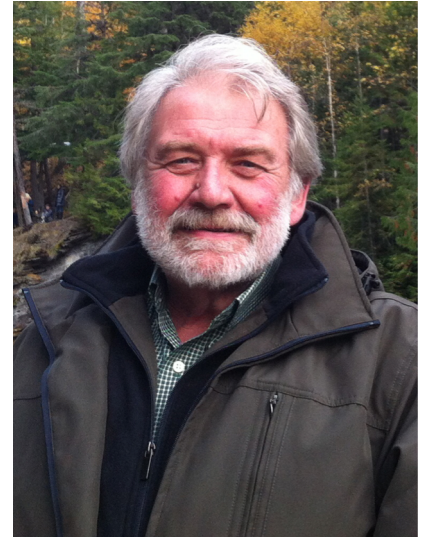
Our next regularly scheduled program meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 14 at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ in Hartford Village, beginning at 7 p.m. The featured presenter will be Dick McCormack.

Dick began performing his eclectic mix of song and commentary over fifty years ago. He has performed at small coffee houses, large concert halls, at noisy bars and at churches. Twenty-seven million people watched his NBC Sports baseball satires, and many thousands were regular listeners to Vermont Public Radio's "Dick McCormack's Veranda." He has recorded nine albums.

Dick has been elected twelve times to represent Windsor County in the Vermont Senate and has taught History, Government and History of Rock and Roll in the State College System.

He brings his performing, government, and teaching experience together in several topical lecture-concert programs: Songs of Protest ("Yankee Doodle" to Springsteen), the Great Folk Scare of the Sixties, a Sung History of Vermont (using comment, historical and original songs).

Join us on June 14. All Hartford Historical Society programs are free and open to the general public. This will be our last program before we break for the summer, and it's one you surely won't want to miss. Bring a music-loving friend!



Dick McCormack served in the Vermont State Senate from 1988 to 2002 and again from 2006 to present.

You are Cordially Invited to Attend The Hartford Historical Society's Annual Meeting

2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 27, 2017

Garipay House – Rain or Shine

Dessert Potluck with prize for best entry

**Reports of Officers and Committees
Progress on the Purchase of Elks Club
Election of Officers
Tours of the Museum**



Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Hartford Historical Society with some of its early members. Be a part of this discussion as the Hartford Historical Society looks at its potential impact on the past, present, and future of the Hartford community.

Reminder, dues for calendar year 2017 were payable in January!



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Memberships run for a calendar year (Jan-Dec).

Individual \$20.00 per year
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 Mail this completed form, along with a check payable to Hartford Historical Society, to:
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THANK YOU!

Hartford Historical Society
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Contact Name: _____
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THANK YOU!

Curator's Corner

By Pat Stark

On March 3, Jericho Woodworking reinstalled the 1962 Aerial Photograph of White River Junction that formerly hung in the lobby of the old Municipal Building. They made a beautiful wooden frame for it and covered it with glass to prevent further damage. The next time you are in the Town Hall to pay your bills, turn around and check it out!

Recent Donations

We have recently received two exciting artifact donations—a metal clip holding a 1945 US IRS motor vehicle use tax stamp—\$5.00 and a 1787 copper Vermont coin (in poor condition). The coin was found in their garden when they lived on Woodmont (now Crystal Place). These came to us from Jay & Betty Fletcher. We are always grateful for these donations!

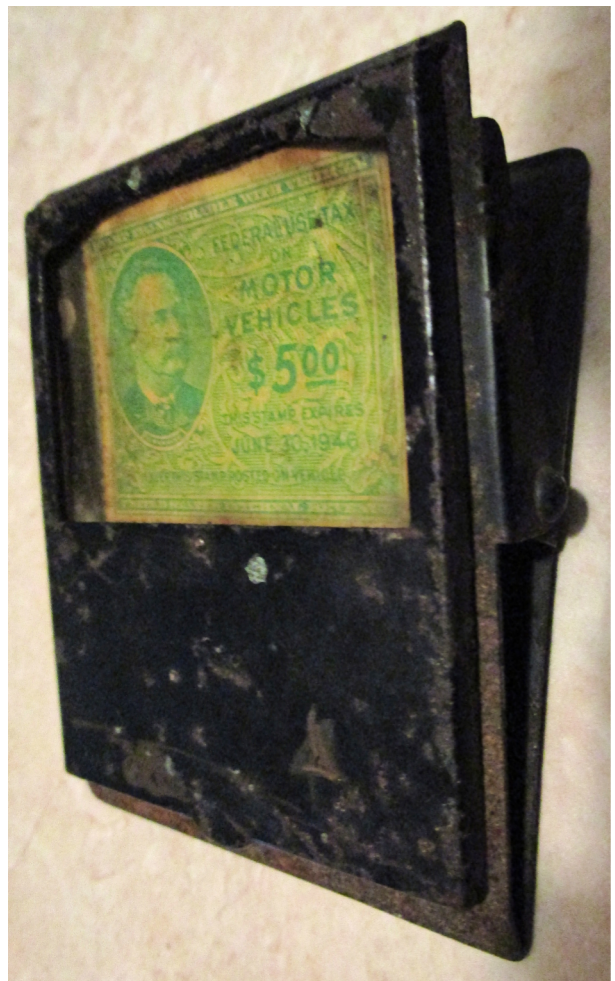
Historic Commission

The Hartford Historic Preservation Commission has been busy. The Advent Christian Campground Historic District Nomination is awaiting official acceptance, and that's just a matter of time. The White River Junction Historic District Update and Expansion is in the works. Consultant Brian Knight gave a presentation on April 26 comparing photos of White River Junction buildings, both past and current. The Town of Hartford hopes to expand its historic district south on Main St. and east across the White River.

Volunteers Needed

The Hartford Historical Society is in need of volunteers to conduct oral histories. Training will be provided. We have a tape recorder, so all that is required is to visit, ask some leading questions and then sit back and let the person tell his or her "story." Those interested may call Pat Stark at 802/295-3077 or the Garipay House at 802/296-3132.

Top, a wonderful 1787 copper Vermont coin found in a garden in Crystal Place, VT. Below, a 1945 motor vehicle use tax stamp. Stop by the Garipay House to see these great items.



Hartford Historical Society

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HHS Calendar

OPEN HOUSE at the Garipay House

Until further notice, the Garipay House Museum is open to the public Wednesday through Friday each week from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or by appointment. To be sure that we are open, look for the flag outside the building or contact us at 802 296-3132. For an appointment, contact Pat Stark at 295-3077 M-F from 9 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

MONTHLY MEETINGS open to the public

Fourth Thursday of the month – **HHS Board of Directors meeting** at the Garipay House, 6:30 p.m. (Please check for exact date). For more information, call Mary Nadeau at 295-2123.

Saturday, May 27, 2017 - Hartford Historical Society Annual Meeting and Dessert Potluck, 2 p.m. at the Garipay House.

PROGRAMS

Wednesday, June 14, 2017 – Vermont Folk Songs with Dick McCormack, 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village. Refreshments.

Saturday, June 24, 2017 – Hartford Alumni Day.

Tuesday, July 4, 2017 – Presentation of the Hartford Cane to Hartford's Eldest Citizen.

Saturday, August 12, 2017 – 7th Annual Abenaki and Indigenous Peoples Honoring Day, 11 a.m-5 p.m. at Lyman Point Park.

Wednesday, September 13, 2017 – “The Jericho Community” presented by Sue Camp, 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village. Refreshments.

Wednesday, November 8, 2017 – “Vermont’s Poor Houses” 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. Carole Haehnel will be happy to assist you in exploring the resources we have and in accessing information from The Landmark, which we have on microfiche. Ray Fifield can assist researchers. Just call the library to set it up.