



HARTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

• HARTFORD, VERMONT 05047 •

HARTFORD • QUECHEE • WEST HARTFORD
WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER

Volume 5, Issue 4 • SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • November 1992

November Meeting . . .

We are invited as guests of the Lebanon Historical Society to a tour of the Marion J. Carter House and to see the Historical Society's collections and their new vault. The Carter House is the big yellow house facing Colburn Park, (the Green) with the entrance to the house on the Bank Street side, by the parking lot. Parking is also available around the park. The Historical Society exhibits are on the second floor, but for those who cannot climb stairs, the downstairs rooms of the Carter House are worth a trip.

**The meeting will be
Wednesday, November 11, 7:00 p.m.
at the Marion J. Carter House, Lebanon, NH**

The first floor of the Carter House has been left as it was in Marion Carter's lifetime, with Victorian style family furnishings, ornate woodwork, a music room with a chandelier and carpeting dating to the middle 1800s, a built-in icebox in the kitchen, a laundry room with soapstone sinks. This generous bequest from Marion Carter continues to inspire those who visit her home.

Robert Leavitt, founder of the Historical Society in 1958, and Lebanon's Town Historian, will give us a brief review of the importance of the Carter family to the surrounding community, and tell us how the Historical Society came to be in the Carter home.

Lebanon has another noteworthy building, the Jonathan Dana House. It was built about 1765 and hardly modernized, (although there were 35 layers of wallpaper in the kitchen bedroom) and was scheduled to be demolished. Thanks to Robert Leavitt and other concerned citizens, it was moved to Seminary Hill in West Lebanon. The new annex, designed for educational/museum use, is nearly complete. This house is important not only to Lebanon, but to all surrounding towns, as the craftsmanship is unusually fine for a pioneer home in the wilderness.

Please join us in a visit across the river to our neighbors – our past and theirs are interwoven.



Carter House

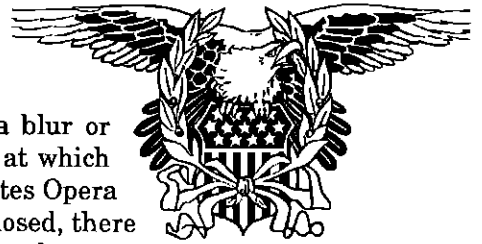
Pictures courtesy of the Lebanon Historical Society



Dana House

Tune into Radio WNHV for meeting cancellations due to weather.

Novembers Past . . .



November 6, 1924 – RECORD VOTE TUESDAY

Tuesday, national election day, passed without a blur or entanglement, and from six o'clock in the morning, at which time the polls for the town of Hartford opened in Gates Opera house, until five o'clock in the evening, when they closed, there was a steady procession to the voting booths of men and women voters, and during all this there was no unpleasant incident.

...The counting of the ballots other than those for town representative began at six o'clock and at nine o'clock the work was finished. For President of the United States, the total vote cast was 1,367 of which 1,072 were for President Coolidge (out of 2,320 registered voters) . . . On the completion of the Opera House work there was an assembling in the dining room of the Junction house where had been installed a direct telegraph line and equipment for the receipt of election returns from the entire country. Access to the room was free to all and there was present from first to last many people.

For President, Calvin Coolidge, R.	1,072
John W. Davis, D.	210
Robt. M. LaFollette, Prog.	85

November 8, 1928 – HARTFORD CASTS LARGEST VOTE IN HISTORY OF TOWN

The general election Tuesday drew the largest vote in the history of the town, 1,720 voters (out of 2,572 registered voters) registering their preference for candidates at the polls during the day. The polls opened at 6 a.m., and when the doors were unlocked a long line was already in waiting, and by ten o'clock more than three hundred persons had cast their ballots. . . The vote in the Town of Hartford follows:

For President, Hoover, R.	1,144
Smith, D.	552
Varney, P.	1

November 5, 1936 – HARTFORD REGISTERS OVER 2,000 VOTES TUESDAY

Remaining true to its tradition, the state of Vermont again gave its three electoral votes to the Republican presidential candidate Tuesday. . . The Town of Hartford also stuck to tradition by casting a majority of votes for the Republican candidates Tuesday, and the Democratic party went on record by piling up more votes for their candidates than at any previous year. This election drew the largest vote in the history of the town, 2,034 voters registering their preference (out of 3,236 registered voters). . .

For President: Landon, R.	1,026
Roosevelt, D.	986
Browder, C.	2

(From the Mr. & Mrs. Alfred T. Wright LANDMARK Collection)

A Look Down Hartford's Main Streets

by Helen Aher

Hartford Village, formerly known as White River Village, has undergone many changes from a thriving business community in the late 1800's to the residential area it is today.

In the early 1900's as we look eastward from the Congregational Church, now known as the United Church of Christ, we see a street of shade trees, picket fences and a dirt road with houses on both sides. This road, which ran a distance of about 20 miles through Hartford, a corner of Pomfret, Sharon and to the upper reaches of the White River in

PART I
of a
5-Part Series:

Royalton, was at one time a turnpike or toll road. One toll gate was located in Hartford. Later, by paying 10 or 30 dollars to a corporation, towns became entitled to their section of the turnpike, thus eliminating the toll. Around 1918, it was still a dirt road. Travel was mostly by horse and wagon or sleigh. The roads were rolled during the winter and in the spring the mud was unbelievable - the horse could hardly find solid footing and the mud was over the hub cap on the wagon wheels.

The first house on the left was the home of E. A. Mitchell, Superintendent of the Hartford Woolen Company. Beside the house was a tennis court which is now a parking lot. Across the house was the home, still standing, of B. M. Shepard. The Shepard family were talented musicians much in demand for special occasions.

Beside the Mitchell house was the residence of Louis Sheldon Newton, a well-trained architect who drew the designs for three beautiful homes in Woodstock, the National Bank, private residences belonging to Dartmouth College and many others throughout Vermont and New Hampshire. This home has been renovated by its present owners, George and Jodi Turner. George, coincidentally, is also an architect.



The Shepard Family

The lovely residence which is now known as the House of the Seven Gables was the home of the Morris family. In later years, Annie Morris married Roland Stevens, a lawyer, and for many years it became known as the Stevens' home with its beautiful flower gardens and well-kept grounds.

In 1893 the Hartford Library was erected on land donated by Horace and Seraph Pease with a \$5,000 bequest from Ephraim Morris. It was built to meet the needs of the people. The Library Hall on the second floor was an appreciated convenience to the community. The free use of the hall was given for lectures, entertainment, club meetings, and other social events. Louis Newton gave dancing lessons to young men of the village one winter. For many years the library was under the care of the Hartford Women's Club.

continued on next page . . .

In 1977, six substandard housing units on the left side of the street were purchased by the Town and demolished after relocating the tenants to living quarters that met housing standards. The former harness shop and Hartford Volunteer Fire Station were also taken down.

The Elks Club was once the property of Horace Pease, an influential figure in town and owner of the Pease Hotel. This site, called Sunny Acres, was one of Vermont's most beautiful estates.

For years, what is now Fletcher's Store was a millinery shop run by a prim Mrs. Bannigan. As a child, it was a thrill to hear the tinkle of a bell as one opened the door and saw all the pretty ribbons and feathers she used in making her hats to order.

The next building, without the additions, was a drugstore run by a Mr. French. Later it was sold to A. J. Allard who continued the business as a drugstore. In later years it became a barber shop and pool hall run by Frank Gilmore who eventually, with his wife Vera, opened a drugstore further down the block. This building was also at one time the business office of Horace Pease.

The next property was a grocery and meat market owned and operated for a time by W. C. Morse. The next store was a meat market, grocery and clothing store owned by A. D. Childs. Cookies were sold by bulk - the frosting filled grahams were the best. At that time a clerk filled your order at the counter.



An early view of Main Street in Hartford Village.

Orders were also taken in the morning and delivered in the afternoon by horse and wagon. When Mr. Childs retired, Floyd Coutermarsh operated the store for a while but eventually Daniel and Charles Aher bought the store from Mr. Childs. They sold this store and the upstairs apartments to John Lutz and erected the building now owned by Hathorn/Olson Photo Labs. They opened the new store in 1942 and operated it for 25 years. Interestingly, the Ahers were the first in the area to sell pre-packaged meats and to go entirely to self-service. Mr. Wing of Fairlee leased the building for a while, and then it was bought by John Lutz and for a number of years housed his business, Imperial Printers.

The post office was originally located in A. D. Childs' store, where Will Braley served as postmaster for 15 years. Eventually the green building (recently moved back to Summer Street) was built and served as the post office until the present one was built. The Pease Hotel occupied the central part of the Village until it burned in January of 1889.

The Hartford Diner, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Victor Martin, originally stood where the Hathorn/Olson building is today. When the Aher brothers purchased the site to build their

continued on next page . . .

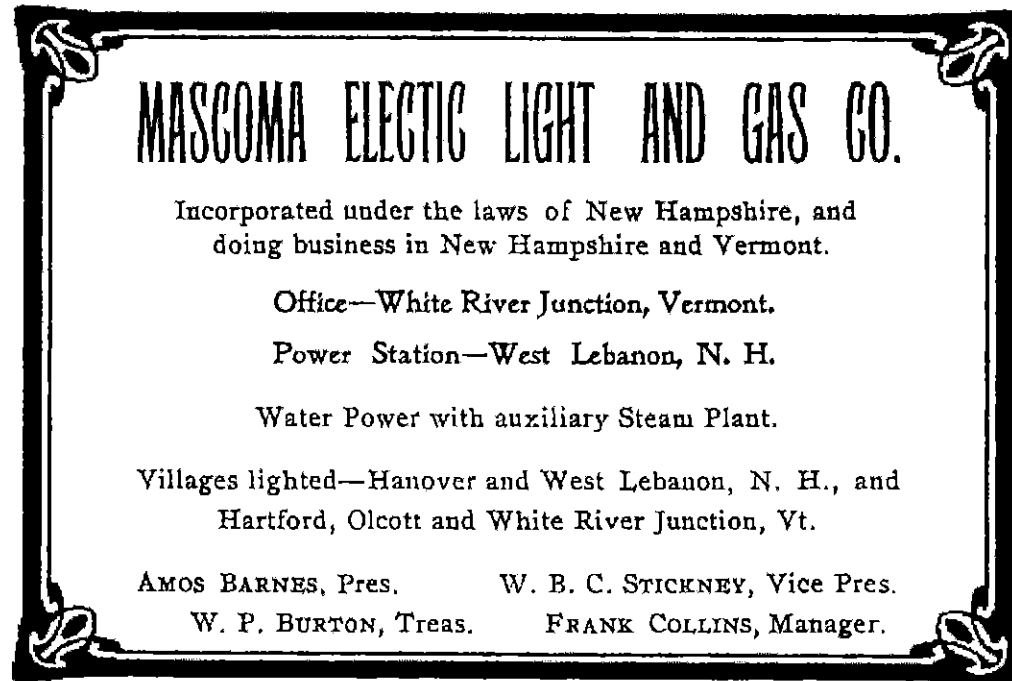
store, the diner was moved across the street. For many years the Grange Hall was a business establishment. It started as a hardware store and later became a grain store operated by the Pease family.

The Davis house, the large brick home on Main Street, was until her death this year, owned by Mrs. Victor Martin. The small brick house beside was, at one time, the office of Louis Newton.

The next residence was owned by Charles Cone, the owner of the Hartford Woolen Mill, and was a beautiful estate which extended back to Summer Street. Beside his house was the home of his daughter, which was eventually moved to the site behind Hathorn/Olson Photo Labs. The large white house in back, now owned by Mrs. Helen Aher, was built for his son Morris, who came back to Hartford to run the Woolen Mill.

Helen Aher has lived in Hartford all of her life. She was a teacher in the local school system for 27 years, and is a longtime member of the Hartford Women's Club and a member of the Historical Society. Her article about Hartford's Main Street first appeared in THE HARTFORD VILLAGE VOICE, Vol. 1, #3 Sept. 1991.

Photograph of Hartford Village courtesy of Helen Aher. Shepard Family photo courtesy of Priscilla Gadzinski.



MASCOMA ELECTIC LIGHT AND GAS CO.

Incorporated under the laws of New Hampshire, and
doing business in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Office—White River Junction, Vermont.

Power Station—West Lebanon, N. H.

Water Power with auxiliary Steam Plant.

Villages lighted—Hanover and West Lebanon, N. H., and
Hartford, Olcott and White River Junction, Vt.

AMOS BARNES, Pres. W. B. C. STICKNEY, Vice Pres.
W. P. BURTON, Treas. FRANK COLLINS, Manager.

When the Power House was the Power Station

An advertisement in the LOYAL CLUB COOKBOOK, pub. White River Jct., Dec. 1896

Recent Gifts

The Society thanks the following individuals for their recent gifts:

Phyllis Tisdale, World War I field glasses.

Richard Steward, souvenir china ashtray and bowl, with pictures of Hartford Library and National Bank, WRJct.; from the Mira W. Davis estate: 2 pocket watches with stands, 3 spoons, leather wallet, school merit award - 1835; commemorative pewter plate from Coolidge Hotel 1975.

Robert Leavitt, article on Hartford church; genealogy of Dana family; newspaper clippings of local WRJct. news 1890, 1891, 1892; photo of Quechee Gorge Railway bridge 1910,

Herbert Adams, 1918 White River Herald issue on new bridges in Vermont.

Fred Bradley, THE LANDMARK, May 10, 1951; items from local businesses, and a pair of old eyeglasses.

Mildred Sumner, 12 photographs of old White River Jct. scenes; newspaper clippings of Hartford interest, other miscellaneous paper items.

“ **Pot Holes:** Another example is in West Hartford, on the Central Railroad. The spot is 60 feet above White River, and the pot-hole 17 feet deep. From this hole was extracted the beautiful sphere of granite, 2 feet 4 inches in diameter, which the visitor will find lying in front of the College buildings in Burlington – of which we have never seen the equal. Two of them were found; but one was buried in the railroad.

From REPORT ON THE GEOLOGY OF VERMONT, Vol. 1, Albert D. Hager, 1861

James Marsh, born in Hartford, VT in 1794 became president of the University of Vermont in 1826. His teaching and educational reforms greatly increased enrollment and ushered in a golden age of academic distinction for the University. He is also noted as the foremost American proponent of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's transcendentalist philosophy. ”

From VERMONT HISTORY, published by The Vermont Historical Society, vol. 60, #3, Summer 1992: Vermont Archives and Manuscripts - the James Marsh Papers - Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont)

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 Village.

Tune into Radio WNHV for meeting cancellations due to weather.