



HARTFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Garipay House
1461 Maple Street
Hartford Village, Vermont

o Hartford

o Quechee

o West Hartford

o White River Junction

o Wilder

Volume 13, No 2

Society Newsletter

November 2000

November Meeting

United Church of Christ
in Hartford Village
Wednesday, November 8th
at 7:00 pm.

Harold Wright, former Postmaster of White River Junction, will give a talk about the history of the Wright family. He and his brother are descendents of both the Gillette and Wright families, among the first settlers of the Town of Hartford. Ancestors include Major Wright, whose tomb is located on the VA Cutoff Road. The Gillettes used to run a brickyard, located behind the cemetery across from the Dothan Brook School. The brickyard supplied Dartmouth College with much of their brick.



Harold Wright and a pair of his prize oxen.

Christmas Tea

Our Society's Annual Christmas Tea is scheduled for Sunday, December 3, from 1:00 - 4:00 at the Garipay House. Parking is available in back of the Garipay House, in the old Hathorn-Olson parking lot, along Maple Street in the same section, and some parking is available across the street from the Garipay House. The winning ticket for the raffle will be drawn at that time. Raffle tickets will be available at the November Meeting.

Board Doings

- o By the time you receive this newsletter, the Garipay House should have a new furnace. Fred Bradley and the Building Committee have worked long and hard researching and coordinating this project. Thanks go to Bob Follensbee for his valued assistance.
- o The Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance has offered to send a mentor to help the Society with Fundraising ideas.
- o Our Society is participating in the official grand opening of the Wilder Post Office, to be held November 9. Peggy McDerment will put together a history of the Wilder Post Office, and Dot Jones will present it.

Open House at the Garipay House is held the first Tuesday (6-8 pm) and the first Sunday (1:30 - 4) of each month. **NOTE:** the weekend day has been changed from Saturday to Sunday beginning in November. The Board of Directors felt that a Sunday afternoon would help attract Society volunteers (as well as visitors) as people have many other commitments on Saturday. Please consider helping out by co-hosting an Open House. Currently the volunteers are mostly Board Members. We will show you what has to be done, and you will be working with an experienced person. We need a minimum of two people per day. Your help would be so appreciated by volunteering just once a year - or even once every other year - your Board of Directors and your Society needs you. Please contact one of the Board Members or Pat Stark about how you can contribute. Most of the work is currently being done by about a dozen people.

September 2000 Meeting

Jack Anderson, a Woodstock resident for over 20 years, related how the path of Route 4 from White River Junction to Woodstock had long intrigued him. Coupled with the lack of old buildings along the roadway, the gradual grade and turns seemed unusual. His presentation included slides, history and commentary about the Woodstock Railroad, including sections of Route 4 that were previously part of the railroad bed, pointing out old landmarks. He went on to speak about how people got from the White River area to Woodstock before the railroad was built: up over the Kings Highway which went along Hurricane Hill, and a second route along the River Road, a more gradual grade for most of the way.

As modes of transportation changed, parts of town were directly affected. Center of Town was once an important stop on the Kings Highway. Once traffic shifted to the railroad, and later to Route 4, Center of Town diminished in importance. Once Rt 4 was opened in 1934, businesses developed along the section of Rt 4 from Quechee Gorge Village east of Quechee Gorge on past the light at the Hartland-Quechee Road, attracting people passing through. The whole Quechee Lakes area was made possible by the new road, which gave easy access to the second home community.

HISTORIC WALKS

The Town of Hartford Recreation Department and the Hartford Historical Society are sponsoring historic village walks this fall in White River Jct. There is one more walk scheduled this year.

- o Quechee: Sunday, October 29, 2:00 - 3:30. Rain date is the following Sunday

If you want to participate in one, call the Recreation Dept 295-5036 to register [no fee]

Burtch-Udall Homestead (Theron Boyd House)

The Friends of the Burtch-Udall Homestead are in the midst of a drive for Charter Members prior to the anticipated opening of the building to the public in 12-18 months. The State of Vermont is providing \$200,000 toward converting the homestead's barn into a visitors center with a parking lot - that is just the beginning.

The Friends of the Burtch-Udall Homestead is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the state in its efforts to open this 1786 Vermont homestead and maintain it for the public's enjoyment and edification. They have formed five committees to (1) work with the Division for Historic Preservation in renovating the homestead and making it accessible to the public, (2) research the 200-year history of the homestead, document its restoration, and provide publicity, (3) attract members (4) manage the organization, and (5) raise funds.

Jeannette Gould is involved with this effort. She can be contacted at 295-5537 for more information.

Removing the Tolls from the Connecticut River Bridge

by Weston Cate

WHITE RIVER JCT - The recent announcement by Vermont's Governor Emerson that the construction of toll roads would be "completely out of character" for the Green Mountain State recalls the long and dramatic struggle to make the toll bridge connecting Hartford and West Lebanon a free bridge.

The New Hampshire legislature in 1794 and the Vermont legislature in 1795 granted Ebenezer Brewster and Rufus Graves of Hanover and Aaron Hutchinson of Lebanon the exclusive right to build a bridge over the Connecticut River anywhere between the mouth of the White River and two miles north of Mink Brook in Hanover.

"The Proprietors of the White River Falls Bridge" failed to build a bridge and in 1801 conveyed their interests in the corporation to Elias Lyman of Hartford.

Lyman built an open "king-post" bridge across the Connecticut just above the entrance of the White River around 1802. In 1835 this open bridge was torn down and a covered bridge way erected by the Lyman Bridge Company. Incorporated in 1836, the company could charge toll that "should be fixed by the justices of the Superior Court of Judicature, who should, every five years thereafter, add or reduce the toll as should appear equitable, provided that the net proceeds from said toll should not exceed ten per centum per anum on the cost and expenditures incurred on account of said bridge."

The company's charter further provided that every five years the schedule of tolls charged should be reviewed by the Superior Court after examining the maintenance costs and the total tolls received.

In 1866 Asa and Oscar Barron of Hartford purchased the corporation's stock for \$2,500.00. The rates of toll never seemed to vary from one five-year period to the next, and citizens of Lebanon, in particular, began to consider the possible town purchase of the bridge. Examination of the records showed that the charter had never been properly complied with and that no returns had been made to the Superior Court since 1842.

Information in the form of a quo warranto was brought to the Superior Court in 1876 and, after referee's hearings, it was ruled that while the corporation had indeed neglected to make proper returns, it had kept the bridge in good repair and therefore would not have to surrender its charter.

One local historian states that the owner "made oath that the tolls yearly collected by him amounted to less than one-half of ten per cent on the cost, to him, of a said bridge . . . still later, the citizens of Lebanon petitioned the court to appoint a committee to appraise the value of said bridge property, whereupon, the said assign, true to his instincts, made oath that the said property was paying him about \$1,800.00 a year, or more than 70% on his investment; in other words, to prevent a forfeiture of the charger, he made an oath that he was receiving less than five per cent on his investment; but, when it became apparent that Lebanon was determined to buy the property, he changed his tactics, and made oath -- simply, that he COMMITTED PERJURY IN THE FIRST INSTANCE."

The New Hampshire county commissioners finally laid out a highway over the bridge to the Vermont line and paid damages of \$3,000.00. The Barrons appealed to the court for increased damages, and were awarded an additional \$3,404.52. (continued next issue)

Hartford Historical Society
 PO Box 547
 Hartford, Vermont 05047



Tomb of the David Wright Family

NON-PROFIT
 ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Permit 15
 Hartford, VT
 05047

Pease's Hotel - Lady

Partial List of Gifts

Book on pronunciation (1877) and Postcard of Mural on Gates Street,
 Model of Swift Plant, Swift Boxcar, and Aerial Photo of Wilder
 Sanborn Maps (1901 and 1925), aerial photos (1940) and blueprints +
 US Census 1850, 1982, Pop. Changes 1900-1950, Officer Bonds
 Smudge Pot for construction sites/highway warnings (1965)
 Quechee Commemorative Mug
 Quechee Church Memorabilia (2000)
 Quechee Gulf Bridge Postcard, Dewey's Mill Photograph (1950)
 Hartford Library China Dish, Hartford Grammar School Grad (1935)
 Various photos, booklets, postcards, and other mementos of Hartford
 Articles and photos
 "Happy Thoughts" booklet, Ladies Aid Society, W. Httf Church
 Pease's Hotel Registers (2) 1897-1900 and 1886-1887

Herbert Adams
 Town of Hartford
 Roy Black
 Fred Bradley
 Jeanette Gould
 Ellen Forkas
 Dot Jones
 Roberta Miller Cowan
 Weston Cate
 Charlotte Harvey
 David Ford, Jim Olson

Officers

Chairman:	Roy Black	295-0608	Treasurer:	Peggy McDerment	295-2357
President:	Dot Jones	295-2701	Secretary:	David Ford	295-7105
Vice President:	Muriel Farrington	295-6511			

Your Board of Directors:

Peggy Adams	295-3118	Alice Hazen	295-2481	Sue Ellen Shambo	296-2230
Roy Black	295-0608	Norman Lyman	295-2061	Mary Nadeau	295-2123
Fred Bradley	295-3819	Bob Follensbee	295-3649	Betty Mills	295-6246