



# 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 1

Society Newsletter

September 2000

## September Meeting

To be held at the  
United Church of Christ  
in Hartford Village  
Wednesday, September 13th  
at 7:00 pm.

Jack Anderson, research historian and Member of the Vermont House of Representatives, will give a talk and slide presentation on the Woodstock Railroad and how much of Route 4 was created from the old railroad bed, along with other interesting facts. This presentation, entitled "The Road from White River to Woodstock: Two Centuries of Change" was received enthusiastically at the Woodstock Historical Society a year or so ago.

## Upcoming Meetings

At the November meeting, Harold Wright, former Postmaster of White River Junction, will give a talk about the history of the Wright family. They were among the first settlers of the Town of Hartford and included Major Wright, whose tomb is located on the VA Cutoff Road.

## And beyond . . .

In May, Jonathan Schectmann will present a slide show enabling us to compare how sites in Hartford looked many years ago with their present-day appearance.

## Tunbridge Historical Fair

Pat Stark, Betty Mills, Peggy Adams, and Barbara Folsom volunteered to be at the Hartford Historical Society's table (shared with the Vermont Railroad Museum - the 494 folks) at the 1st annual Historical Fair held at the Tunbridge Fairgrounds in June. It was so successful that the Board of Directors has formed a committee to start planning for next year when we plan to have our own space. Please let the Board know if you would be willing to help with this project. You also get a chance to visit the other tables and displays from groups around the State.

## Commemorative Post Cards

The Society has packets of 8 postcards available for sale. These packets contain reproductions of old postcards featuring one scene from each village, #494, etc., and can be found at the Town Clerk's office, the Garipay House, and several area merchants. They will also be available at the meetings. They are \$3.00/pack of 50 cents each.

## Glory Days of the Railroad

Glory Days of the Railroad will be held Saturday, September 9, from 10-5. We need volunteers to sign up to help with our booth (in a tent). Please call Pat (295-3077) if you can come sit for an hour or so. Thanks@

## Member Participation

Several members of the Board of Directors have been working intensely with Pat Stark to make the Hartford Historical Society what it is today. It is, at times, mind boggling how much effort and planning has gone into developing and implementing many projects, including but not limited to:

- o Ongoing preservation and cataloging of artifacts and other gifts
- o Preservation Plan
- o Various Events (Railroad Days, Vermont Historical Days at Tunbridge, Summer Flea Market)
- o Hosts for our Open House events

The Garipay House alone requires constant attention. The Preservation Plan outlines what has been done to date, along with a prioritized list of what must and should be done over the next five years.

We, the Board of Directors, welcome you to join us in helping in any way you can. Your help can consist of periodically providing refreshments for a meeting, to helping to catalog The Quechee Times to making minor repairs, to serving on a committee. Our committees are:

Building Committee  
Fundraising Committee  
Newsletter Committee  
Nominating Committee  
Outreach Committee

Program Committee  
Historic Site Marker Committee  
Refreshment Committee  
Christmas Tea Committee  
Tunbridge Historical Fair Committee

Open House at the Garipay House is held the first Tuesday (6-8 pm) and the first Saturday (1:30 - 4) of each month. Please consider helping out on one of these days. 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 is needed** in many areas. 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.

## HISTORIC WALKS

The Town of Hartford Recreation Department and the Hartford Historical Society are sponsoring historic village walks this fall in White River Jct. The schedule is as follows:

- o White River Junction: Wednesday, September 20 5:30 - 7:00
- o Wilder: Sunday, September 24, 2:00 - 3:30
- o Hartford: Sunday, October 15, 2:00 - 3:30
- o Quechee: Sunday, October 29, 2:00 - 3:30

If you are interested in helping to lead one of these walks please contact Pat Stark [295-3077 weekdays]. If you want to participate in one, call the Recreation Dept 295-5036 to register [no fee]

## Reading Between the Lines in the Hotel Registers

David Ford and Jim Olson gave two desk registers from the Pease Hotel, Hartford, VT, to us. One is from June 24, 1886 to March 30, 1887, and the other November 1, 1897 to November 22, 1898 and October 10 to October 29, 1900. In between every page is a blotter page. In the earlier book it is blank, but the latter book has local advertisements.

The registers reflect changes in local customs from 1886 to 1900. In the earlier book most wives were registered as "F.J. Sherman and Lady", but as time went on we find "F.S. Davison & Wife" and by 1898 "Mr. & Mrs. Cooper of White River Jct."

In 1886 the page included a column for "horse". In 1897 there is no column for horse, but one for "call" time (more people using the train and less coming by horse?), although there is a notice, "A Good Livery connected with the House." Also "Free Buss (sic) to all trains arriving at White River Junction." Most of those who registered probably were traveling salesmen who came by railroad. P. Davis came from Portland, Maine with a team, for which he was charged \$1.00.

Patrons from the surrounding towns, such as William Hewitt, W.F. Jones and Harold Dana of Woodstock, came for dinner and stabled two horses. D.L. Cushing of Quechee came by horse quite often for dinner. Local people and those from surrounding towns came frequently for tea or dinner. Some came every day.

Monday, October 18, 1886, "Whitmore and Clarks Minstrels, Excelsior Band and Orchestra," seventeen men registered. A note beside their names: "Rehearsal at 2:00 P.M. Call 6:00 Train 7:30 A.M". Hartford was just a one-night stand.

Saturday, October 29, 1898 "Al Martz Specialty Co." registered. Noted beside the ten men's names is "Hotel Hall To Night". Was this a minstrel show? Friday nights in March 1898 the Dartmouth Orchestra (four men) registered, presumably to play for dinner entertainment.

The 1886 book has the American Hotel Guide, listing towns, populations, hotels and rates. In Burlington, VT, population 14,387, the Van Ness Hotel charged \$2.00 to \$3.50, whereas in Rutland, population 14,000, you could stay at the Barns for \$1.50. At the Eagle in Woodstock, population 2,815, rates were \$2.00.

One of my favorite items: A local wit from White River Jct who came to tea on Sunday, February 20, 1898 with three friends, signed his name "Oscar Wilde" (The real Oscar was in France 1897 to 1900 when he died, so I doubt we can claim any fame there.) My favorite name: Lulu Belle Burns (of Rochester, NY, stayed March 1, 1898).

Page after page are the names of traveling salesmen (I think). Only a few listed their companies - I wish more had. But their places of residence were revealing a great many came from Boston. From June 24 to December 27, 1886, 132 different towns were listed as residence. Hartford was truly a crossroads. I made copies of the first pages of the two books, a list of the 132 towns, several interesting pages plus where a bored night clerk (I am guessing) copied comic pictures and political cartoons about Teddy Roosevelt and Cuba.

Priscilla Gadzinski  
Curator 7/31/00

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### **Officers**

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