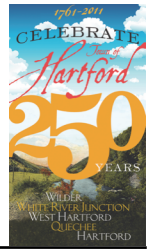




Hartford Historical Society

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

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



Volume 32, No. 4

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

September-October 2019

A Romantic Look at Hartford's Lone Pine

By Mary Nadeau

In the introduction of her book, *A Valley Family*, Alice Cone Perry gives the following account: “Hartford, my parents’ birthplace, is the last village in the Valley before the White River joins the Connecticut at White River Junction, a mile away. Although for many years “The Junction” has been the more important of the two, before the railroad came, in 1848, Hartford, or “White River Village” as it was first called, was the manufacturing and trading and cultural centre for the township of Hartford. The first houses were built on a rather wide plateau on the north side of the river. This plateau had been covered with old growth white pine trees, a forest that extended up the slopes behind it. The “Lone Pine,” a landmark that stands out above the other trees back of the village, is, in 1957, the sole survivor. When I was a child, remains of others could be seen in many “stump fences” between the cleared fields on these hillsides.”

Two prominent families, Cone and Morris, play significant roles in the history and significance of the tree that we know as The Lone Pine.

Mark Cone, born in Hartford in 1819, was trained as a tailor and later opened a store in Hartford Village. In it, he sold everything, “from buttons to bananas,” according to Mrs. Perry. His older sister, Harriet, was married to Luther Pease “...who owned much of what is now Summer Street in Hartford, and the hill north of the village. He also owned and operated ‘Pease’s Hotel’ and engaged in the manufacture of hay forks.”

The second of Mark’s children, Charles Cone, was born in Hartford in 1854. While he was a senior at Dartmouth, young Charlie proposed to 17 year-old Kate Morris, who replied that she’d have to ask her mother! The mother appears to have been on Charlie’s side, and the two became



The Lone Pine was a favorite meeting place of Charles Cone and Kate Morris prior to their marriage. The tree still stands on the hillside above Hartford Village.

Continued on page 8.



One Room Schoolhouses

Presented by Steve Taylor

Hartford had a number of rural schools and perhaps you experienced one. Come learn more and share your story at 7 p.m. Wednesday, September 11, 2019, at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ in Hartford Village. Refreshments.

From the Editor . . .

Happy to report that renovations to the first floor bathroom are complete. The board is doing a great job making the Garipay House more accessible and convenient for visitors.

The Lone Pine, which still stands proudly on the hillside above Hartford Village, was a favorite meeting place for Charles Cone and Kate Morris during their courtship in the 1800's as recounted by Mary Nadeau in this issue. After his marriage, Charles Cone purchased the property and enjoyed picnics with his family near the Lone Pine. A small circle of woodland on which the pine has stood for centuries was given to the society by heirs of the Cone family.

Many readers know Les Gibbs who has been very active in Hartford since being born here in 1940. This issue, he talks about his life as an organist at local churches and his 21 years of service in the U.S. Army.

Nice to note that Simon Pearce has requested input from the Hartford Historic Preservation Committee concerning renovation of buildings on Quechee Main Street so that historic character is preserved. The committee is also urging the town to adopt a demolition ordinance to protect historic structures. For more information, contact the town or society members Pat Stark, Roy Black, or Susanne Abetti.

We deeply regret the passing of Dr. Leo Zacharski, unofficial historian of the Jericho District and long-time member of the society. We appreciate the loyal support of Leo and his wife Pat.

We welcome suggestions and corrections. Perhaps you have a historical tidbit or family story. And thanks to those who have used our PayPal form at hartfordhistory.org to renew memberships and make donations. Your support helps keep local history alive!

Scott Fletcher, Editor

What's in YOUR Attic?

• In 2016 Ron Betourney, owner at the time of the former Perkins Farm, Route 5 South, White River Junction (on the right just beyond the present Wright Farm) found approximately twenty-five business journals/ledgers while cleaning his attic. He recognized them as historical documents and brought them to the Hartford Historical Society three years ago where they sat in a corner of the kitchen until recently. After looking through several of these journals it was determined that they were from the Perkins Brothers store, Marlow, NH. How did they find their way to Hartford? Apparently the son of Waldo H. Perkins (owner of the store), Russell Nelson Perkins, moved to Hartford in the early 1900's and inherited them when his father died. Judy Barwood of the Hartford Historical Society returned them to Marlow in July and the Marlow Historical Society was most appreciative to have them returned. You never know what might be in YOUR attic!



Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

<http://www.hartfordhistory.org>

info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com

802-296-3132

Board Members and Officers

Judy Barwood—President	802-295-2435
Roy Black—Vice-President	802-295-0608
Pat Stark—Secretary	802-280-2221
Peggy McDerment—Treasurer	802-295-2357
Gaylord Newcity—Board Chairman	802-296-2269
Lannie Collins—Board Member	802-356-3883
Pat Rondeau—Board Member	603-675-6612

Program Director	Mary Nadeau	802-295-2123
Museum Director	Vacant	
Curator/Archivist	Pat Stark	802-280-2221
Newsletter Editor	Scott Fletcher	310-227-3147
Print & Web Design	Scott Fletcher	310-227-3147
Volunteer	Carole Haehnel	802-295-3974
Long Range Planning	Judy Barwood	802-295-2435
Cemetery/Snow Plow	Art Peale	802-295-6100
GenCenter Director	Carole Haehnel	802-295-3974
Genealogist	Carole Haehnel	802-295-3974

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.

Hartford's Les Gibbs Steps Out From Behind the Organ

By Scott Fletcher

In 1947, Lester Gibbs came down with scarlet fever so he missed four months of first grade. His house was quarantined so only his mother could live there and his dad had to move back in with his parents up in Jericho.

Fortunately, there was a retired Hartford teacher named Mira Davis who insisted on visiting Les on the days when he was not delirious with fever. She ignored warnings from authorities that she could be jailed for defying the quarantine. Les remembers her saying, "I'm older than all of you, have survived more than you, and this is not going to bother me."

Les remembers she lived in a cottage between Hartford Village and White River Junction that was built by her fiancé who was killed in the First World War. Miss Davis was a very capable teacher and, by the time Les returned to school, he was well ahead of the rest of his class.

To strengthen his heart and lungs, a doctor encouraged Les to play the clarinet, which he started at age seven and continued through high school. He also taught himself the keyboard by figuring out hymns on his grandmother's pump organ. "I learned the notes on the keyboard and I already knew scales," he remembers. "One day I could see the pattern and didn't have to think about where the notes were," he says. "I was about seven when that happened."

Soon, his musical talent began to be noticed. "There was an old manual reed organ at the chapel (at the Greater Hartford Congregational Church)," he recalls, "and one Sunday while my mother was setting up for Sunday School, I turned it on and sat there playing hymn tunes. The organist came in and said, 'Lester where did you learn how to do this?' Well, on my grandmother's pump organ," he said.

So the organist took Les into the church and sat him on the bench of the pipe organ. "My feet were too short to reach the pedals," he remembers, "but he started giving me pointers on how to substitute fingers to keep the sound going."

A few years later, Les met the organist at the Hartford Methodist Church and she invited him to play the organ there. "Then Marjorie Romano at the Catholic Church got wind of me," says Les. "She said, 'you need to come by the Catholic Church and play our pipe organ.' And the Episcopal Church at that time was right across from the Catholic Church and it had a

beautiful old three manual Moller organ. One of my classmates, Betty Robinson, also played the organ and she took me there to play.

In high school, Les began taking piano lessons with Marguerite Paine of Hartford. He also formed a band with friends David Mayhew, John Preston, Bill Aher, and Sherrill Nott. They played for a variety of organizations and events around town. In the early years of rock and roll, they never played popular music. "We just played the old stuff," Les says.

As Les became known around town, he was invited to substitute as organist at the Methodist Church several times. He was allowed to practice at the Congregational Church but didn't perform there until he was 20 years old and home on leave from the Army. "They called and said, 'Bob is sick, can you play tomorrow?' So I did."

In 1969, Les was home after serving in Vietnam for 15 months. He remembers that the pastor of the Hartford Congregational Church, Margaret Stoddard, was strongly opposed to the Vietnam War. After considerable thought, though, Les decided to wear his uniform to church on Sunday. Saturday night he got a call from pastor Stoddard. "She said, 'I know you're planning to come to the service, would you mind playing for the service?' I said, 'No, I'd be happy to play for the service.'" So Les showed up in his dress blue uniform with his combat ribbons.



Top, Les Gibbs at home in 1946. When he was quarantined with scarlet fever the following year, Mira Davis insisted on teaching him. When he returned to school after four months, he was far ahead of his class.

Continued on page 4.

Les Gibbs continued from page 3.

Pastor Stoddard was gracious to Les and the service went smoothly. “We hit it off fine,” he says. Les told her about his experiences in Vietnam and she came to deeply appreciate his service. “Every time I came home to visit, she asked me to play,” he recalls. At her request, Les played the organ at her funeral in 2018.

Les joined the army in 1959 and served until 1981 when he retired and moved with his wife and two boys to San Antonio, Texas. He served as organist and chapel director for five years. Then he took a full-time position at a Presbyterian Church, began working evenings in a funeral home, and enrolled in a two-year program to become a funeral director.

Having divorced, Les came back to Hartford by himself in 1995 to help care for his father who developed lung cancer. “The first thing I did was go around to all the churches and leave my name,” he says. “The next weekend I got a call to play for two services at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Hanover. The next weekend he played for the First Congregational Church in West Lebanon. And the next weekend, he played at the Woodstock Congregational Church.

Then he got a call to serve as interim organist for a few months and that job lasted 18 years. After that, Les went to St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Norwich where he played for three years. During that time, he also played on Saturday nights for St. Denis Catholic Church in Hanover.

Ten years ago, he started playing at a Saturday service at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Lebanon, which evolved into playing on Sunday mornings. “I kept those running while I was still at St. Barnabas in Norwich,” he says. “Then I took all three masses at Sacred Heart.” He also began playing Sunday evenings at Providence Presbyterian Church in West Lebanon. And he added three vesper services at nursing homes in Woodstock one Sunday each month. In addition to that, Les works at Quechee Gorge Gifts and Sportswear three days a week. For the past ten years, Les has also helped with fundraising breakfasts on the last Saturday of each month at the Norwich Grange.

At age 78, Les is still active as an organist and grange leader after years of service to his country and his community.

The Man Behind Harry Gibbs Street

On your left, two blocks up Christian Street from Maple Street in Hartford Village, is Harry Gibbs Street. “It became Harry Gibbs Street because my dad was very active in the town,” says his son Les Gibbs. “He did a lot of gardening and he used to take plants out of our gardens and put them in flowerbeds around town.

“Going north on Interstate 91 after the White River Junction exit you come down the hill approaching the bridge, there is a line of lilac trees that all came from our property,” he continues. “My grandfather was on the state highway crew so they got permission to put them there. That was a year or two after the Interstate opened.”

Harry Gibbs grew up on a farm in Jericho, married his neighbor, and lived in a small apartment in Hartford Village when they had their son, Lester. In 1945, they moved to a house on what is now Harry Gibbs Street where Harry lived the rest of his life.

Harry and his wife were members of the local grange, as were his parents and grandparents. Granges have been vibrant organizations, mostly in farming communities, since 1867. In 1931, Harry and his wife became charter members of a new grange organized in Hartford.

Harry and his wife were also well known at the Blackwater Pavilion dance hall in Canaan, New Hampshire where he played harmonica and called square dances on Saturday nights. Les accompanied his parents and remembers the challenge of getting to church on time after a late night on Saturday.

For many years, Harry worked at T&L Electric in Hartford where he sold generators to farmers so they could continue milking when storms knocked the power out. By the time he died in 1996, many Hartford residents were friends of Harry Gibbs.

Above right, Harry Gibbs married Catherine in 1935. For many years, they planted flowers from their garden in plots around Hartford including a row of Lilacs along Interstate 91.



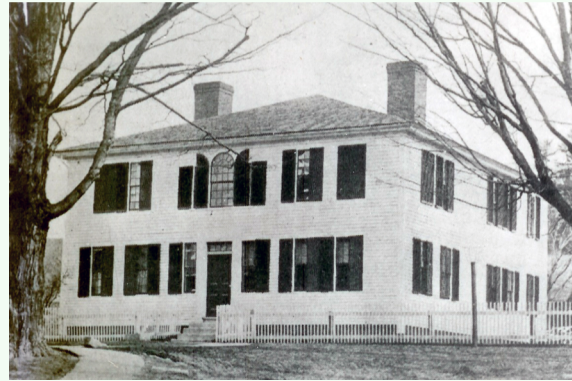
Hilltop Hearse House is a Quechee Time Capsule



According to J. S. Dow, secretary of the Quechee Cemetery Committee, the first reference in local records to the hearse house in the Hilltop Cemetery is dated May 30, 1887. W. S. Bragg was paid for labor on the building. This is also the date on which the hearse was paid for. The hearse could be rented at what appear to be varying rates. Cemetery records make no mention of horses. The house still contains well-used equipment including shovels, picks, and ropes for lowering caskets. But there is no sign of the hearse.



Historic Markers Dot Hartford Landscape



At top left is the marker placed by the D.A.R. in 1934 to mark the site of the Elias Lyman Homestead on the corner of Pine and Maple Streets. Lyman built a house known as The Point in 1796. Above left, the D.A.R. placed this plaque in 1911 to mark the center of town in 1774. Hartford's first meeting house was built on the site in 1784. A time capsule prepared by middle school students was buried under the marker on the town's 250th anniversary. Above center and right, a granite and wrought iron watering trough was dedicated to the memory of George Williston Smith on August 6, 1907. It was given by his sister Helen W. Smith and placed near the First National Bank of which Mr. Smith was the first president. George Smith owned the Smith Cracker Company and was a civic leader in Hartford until his death in 1905. This monument now harbors nasturtiums in front of the Municipal Building. Below, the marker dedicating a bridge across the White River to longtime Hartford city manager Ralph Lehmann.





Top left is the Soldiers Monument in the Hartford Cemetery inscribed, To the Soldiers of the Town of Hartford and the Abraham Lincoln Post #85. Erected by the Loyal Club May 30, 1892. Made of Barre granite for \$650, it was intended to list Civil War soldiers buried in the field. Top center, World War I Honor Roll was in front of the Hartford School for many years. Its remains are now in the care of the Hartford Historical Society. Below it is the World War II Honor Roll. Top right, the Veterans of All Wars Monument was dedicated on Memorial Day, 1963. It now stands on the lawn of the Municipal Building. Above left, the Armed Forces Memorial in Veterans Memorial Park on the corner of Railroad Row and Bridge Street. "Leaving Home," a sculpture of five stainless steel geese (one for each branch of the armed services) by West Hartford's Jeff Sass and Bob White of Norwich commemorates soldiers who have left town to serve in the military. Above right, The Wilder War Memorial in front of the Wilder Club and Library was erected by the Wilder Men's Club in the late 1940's to memorialize Wilder residents who served during time of war. Below, the Gilson Cross in Quechee in memory of Tillotson Wheeler Gilson (1848-1914) sits on the grounds of the Mid-Vermont Christian School. In 2006, the new bridge in West Hartford was dedicated to Bryon E. Lane, Jeffrey S. Holmes, John Thomas Stone, and "to the Memory of all of those who have fallen in the defense of our country, our way of life, our freedom and for all that we believe as a nation." Below right, the flagpole in front of Hartford High School is dedicated to, "students of Hartford who, in serving their country, paid the supreme sacrifice."



engaged after her father, Ephraim Morris, gave his consent.

Ephraim was an extremely wealthy businessman and influential resident of Hartford. His enterprises included partnerships in a plaster grinding business in Hartford, a chair factory, the Ottauquechee Woolen Mill, and the Hartford Woolen Mill which, in its day employed a significant number of Hartford-area residents. He served as vice president of the First National Bank, as a grand juror for many years, and was unanimously elected to the state legislature. Perhaps his most enduring legacy is the Hartford Library. Horace Pease, whose home later became the Hartford Elks' Club, donated a portion of his property for the new library and Ephraim donated the cost of



In 1881, Kate Morris broke her engagement with Charles Cone after her father said it was unacceptable for him to continue working in his father's tailor shop.

building the structure, which came to \$5,000. In addition he set up a \$5,000 endowment for the library.

In 1884, while touring Egypt and the Holy Lands with his wife and Kate, his house burned to the ground. It was replaced by the structure that is today referred to as the House of Seven Gables, located immediately to the west of the Hartford Library. It was the grandest home in all of Hartford, and Ephraim had the distinction of paying the highest property taxes in town.

After graduating from Dartmouth, Charlie Cone returned to Hartford and learned the tailoring trade, to the dismay of the Morris family. He helped at his father's store, although he held a subordinate position. In the meantime, Kate pursued a degree at Smith College.

As time went on, Ephraim grew increasingly skeptical about the suitability of Charles as a husband for his daughter due to his apparent lack of motivation to "make something of himself." At one point, he

offered Charlie a position at the Ottauquechee Woolen Mill in Hartland, but Charlie declined. Charlie was under pressure from both his parents and Kate's to establish himself in a pursuit more worthwhile than tailoring and shop keeping. So, in 1878, he entered Johns Hopkins University for graduate study with no apparent career goals in mind. After completing his studies there, he entered Heidelberg University in Germany, with the intention of becoming a philologist (Philology: the study of literary texts and of written records, the establishment of their authenticity and their original form and the determination of their meaning.)

Kate graduated from Smith College in 1879 and entered, "the Harvard Annex," the forerunner of Radcliffe College (women were not permitted to matriculate at Harvard). She later became the first woman in the United States to earn a Ph.D. with a dissertation entitled, "The Electoral College of Germany."

In the spring of 1881, Kate and her father sailed to Europe accompanied by Charlie's sister, Cate. Charles took a break from his studies at Heidelberg to tour Europe with them, and the prolonged interruption of his studies proved to be disastrous, so he sailed back to America with Ephraim and the two women.

Upon returning to Hartford, Charlie announced his decision to return to work at his father's business. This was totally unacceptable to Ephraim, who declared that he, "would not allow Kate to marry Charles if he remained in Hartford with his father, and persuaded her, against her will and all her own inclination, that it would be disastrous to marry Charles under such conditions. Wanting to be a dutiful daughter, she broke the engagement. This happened sometime during the summer of 1881; an interval of tribulation began which lasted nine hideous months."



This dress was worn by Kate Morris and may have been her wedding dress in 1884. The fawn wool bodice is cut in a tailor-made style, tightly fitted button closure, long cuffed sleeves and an elaborate tail.

Continued on page 9.

Charlie shortly thereafter embarked on an extended trip to the Midwest and as far south as Florida in search of employment or investment opportunities, “somewhere away from Hartford.” When his father’s health took a precarious turn, however, he returned to Hartford.

Kate’s mother, Almira, who was called Allie, was won over by the recently-returned Charlie, who had put on weight and was now smartly dressed. There is no written record of Charlie and Kate’s actual reconciliation, but it is believed to have taken place just before Kate’s departure for her Ph.D. examination. Alice Perry writes, “I am sure that a highly romantic and emotional scene took place. Just giving me a hint of it, perhaps thirty years later, made my mother’s eyes sparkle and her face glow in a way I’ve never forgotten!”

Their re-engagement was kept secret for quite some time, due to Ephraim’s negative view of Charlie (although Allie was completely won over and offered the couple encouragement). Alice writes, “In a small village like Hartford, it was impossible to keep the affair as private as the principals fondly hoped to do. I suppose they wanted to avoid more of the echoing gossip that had reverberated around them the previous winter. They met clandestinely all that summer, often in some of their childhood haunts on the hill back of the village, each “going for a walk” alone, doubtless to the intense edification of all who saw one or the other strolling up the street. Appointments were sometimes made by letter, and two of Kate’s were preserved. “Shall I see you Monday morning at the same time and place? 9:30, and on Tuesday if Monday is not pleasant?” Later on, in cold weather, they met at the Morris home. “As a sign that the coast is clear, I will leave the shade up in the front parlor, but if Uncle Ed or anyone is here it shall be down, in which case you are to come to the side door and I will ingratiate you into the little room where the plants are.” Eleven-year old sister Annie often delivered these notes to Charles in the store where she had been sent, ostensibly, on an errand. She remembered her part in the affair as seeming indescribably exciting and romantic.”

Eventually, Ephraim came around, and the two were married in 1884. Before the marriage took place, Charlie had purchased and renovated the old Brooks mansion located immediately to the west of what is now known as DeCoff’s Corner. He became a partner in the Hartford Woolen Mill, a position he held until his death it passed down to his son, Morris, and from Morris to his son John.



Charles Cone remodeled the Brooks mansion in Hartford Village prior to his marriage to Kate Morris in 1884. In this home, they raised their children Morris and Alice.

Kate and Charlie loved the outdoors and took great pleasure in long walks and picnics. In 1903, Charlie bought “30 or 40 acres of pastureland, just north and west of the village, the scene of so many of their childhood and courting days.” Alice writes, “For several years, a feature of family picnics on the knoll back of the church was the burning of a mighty pile of old branches and logs which he and Morris had been accumulating there. A row of sugar maples was set out along the wood road that climbed to the picnic ground. 350 white pine seedlings were planted in a clearing higher up, to supplement the growth already there, offspring of the survivor of the primeval forest. Early that first spring, Kate and Charles ‘had a charming walk up on the farm...I love that Leader Tree’ (a name out of their childhood – now referred to as the Lone Pine). It makes me happy that while I live, no axe shall touch it or sawmill tear it into boards.

“In May, a couple of years later, they had been all round their acreage. ‘We came back through the pine grove...there was an opening and a lovely view up the river. I called Charles to look at it. We came out by the Leader Tree and I could not stop looking at the view, river and hills and the exquisite light green of the new leaves. I used to go there as a little girl, and when we were courting, and my children go there now...The whole prospect is full of memories of early settlers from Connecticut and of sturdy New England Life.’”

Kate passed away in 1929 and Charles in 1935. The property was inherited by Alice, and eventually the land was sold, leaving a plot 120 feet in diameter around The Old Pine. The heirs of Charles and Kate Cone have since given this local landmark to the Hartford Historical Society.

“Hats Off” to Our Local Business Supporters!



Benefactors
Geobarns

Patrons
Cloverleaf Jewelers
Merchants Bank
Schaal Electric

Society dues are payable after January 1 each year. Please return this form or use the PalPal form at hartfordhistory.org. Thanks!

LET OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS KNOW YOU APPRECIATE THEIR SUPPORT!

Heart to Home LLC

Sabil & Sons Inc.

Studio Nexus

Bailey/Howe Library at UVM

Meeting House Furniture Restoration

Please contact us to learn about promoting your business by supporting the Hartford Historical Society.

Hartford Historical Society
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Regular - \$25 [individual & family]
 Non-Profit - \$30
 Senior - \$20 [individual & family all over age 55]
 Business - \$50
 Life - \$250 [any individual over age 60]
 Patron - \$100

Name: _____ Additional Names: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
State: _____ ZIP Code: _____ Phone: _____
e-mail: _____
Comments: _____

The Hartford Historical Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.
Mail this completed form, along with a check payable to Hartford Historical Society, to:
Hartford Historical Society, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

THANK YOU!

Hartford Historical Society
BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Contact Name: _____
Business Name: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
State: _____ ZIP Code: _____ Phone: _____
e-mail: _____

Special Opportunities for Higher Levels of Support

Silver Sponsor: \$500 _____ Gold Sponsor: \$1000 _____ Platinum Sponsor: \$2500 _____

The Hartford Historical Society is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.
Mail this completed form, along with a check payable to Hartford Historical Society, to:
Hartford Historical Society, Attn: Treasurer, P.O. Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

THANK YOU!

Calvin Coolidge Slept Here

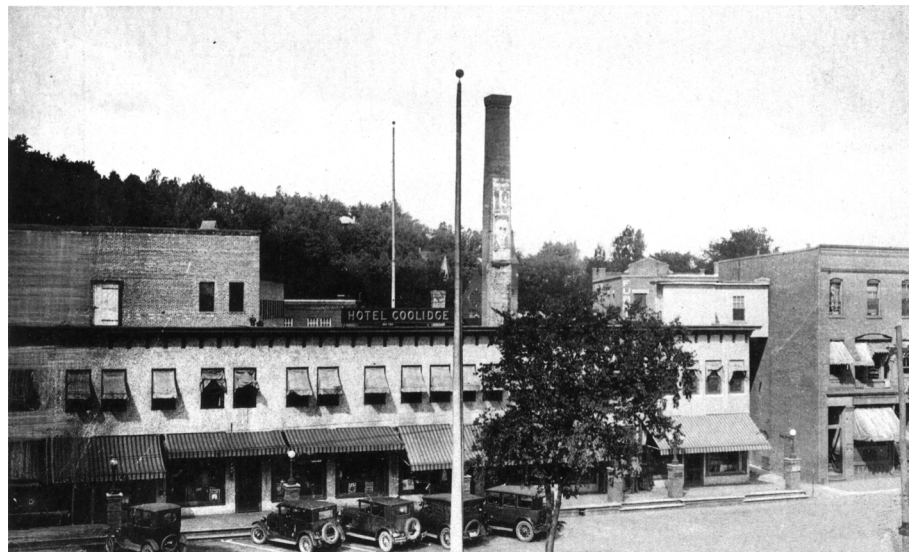
On August 2, 1923, a telegram arrived in White River Junction with news that President Warren Harding had died of a heart attack in San Francisco. The telegraph office phoned the country store across from the Coolidge homestead in Plymouth, Vermont where Vice President Calvin Coolidge was visiting his father and stepmother, but there was no answer because phone operator Florence V. Cilley had gone to bed. So the message was telephoned to Bridgewater where switchboard operator Nellie Perkins gave it to her husband Wilfred who wasted no time driving up the dark mountain road to the Coolidge homestead.

It was near midnight when Calvin Coolidge learned about Harding's death. He was sworn in as President of the United States by his father, a notary public, at 2:47 a.m. on August 3. Ending his visit, Coolidge returned to Washington.

Nathaniel "Than" Wheeler, owner of the Junction House Hotel in White River Junction, was a close friend of Calvin Coolidge's father John. When Wheeler rebuilt his hotel after a fire in 1925, he honored his friend by changing its name to the Hotel Coolidge. He also invited President Coolidge for a visit when he ventured to his home state. To Wheeler's surprise, Coolidge accepted his offer in the spring of 1932 after he had left office and, by all accounts, enjoyed a one-night stay at the Hotel Coolidge.

Coolidge, like his successor Herbert Hoover, loved to fish and Wheeler enlisted his friend "Dusty" Miller of Miller Automotive in White River Junction as a guide. Miller took Coolidge to the exclusive Lakota Club in Barnard, Vermont and rowed while the former president enjoyed an excellent catch.

A consummate salesman, Miller built a close rapport with Coolidge and arranged to bring a Cadillac V16 convertible to Plymouth during the summer so Coolidge and his wife Grace could try it out on mountain roads. Coolidge loved the car and asked Miller to call him at home in Northampton, MA around Christmas. The sale never took place, however, since Coolidge died suddenly of a heart ailment in January 1933.



Top, Calvin Coolidge visited White River Junction in 1932 as the guest of Nathaniel "Than" Wheeler who named the hotel after Coolidge's father John. Below, the Hotel Coolidge was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1925.

Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547

Hartford, VT 05047-0547

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 15



HHS Calendar

THE GARIPAY HOUSE MUSEUM will be open on the second Sunday of the month from 1-4 p.m., or when the flag is flying on Tuesday or Friday, or by appointment. For an appointment or donation, please call 802/296-3132.

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS are open to the public on the last Monday of the month at the Garipay House at 6 p.m. (Please check for exact date.)

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 - "One Room Schoolhouses," presented by Steve Taylor. 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village. Refreshments.

Wednesday, November 13, 2019 - "A Bit of Quechee History Including Dewey's Mills and the Woodstock Railway," presented by Jay Barrett. 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, 1721 Maple Street, Hartford Village. Refreshments.

The **Genealogy Center** on the second floor of the Hartford Library is open Fridays from 2-6 p.m. or by appointment. Please call Carole Haehnel at 802/295-3974. She will be happy to assist you in exploring the resources we have and in accessing information from *The Landmark*, which we have on microfiche.