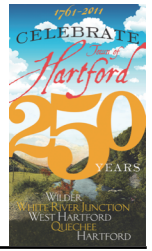




# Hartford Historical Society

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

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



Volume 36, No. 5

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

September-October 2023



## Talking About Cows with Dennis Clay

*By Scott Fletcher*

Dairy farmers typically breed cows once a year and it takes around nine months for a calf to come to term. After a cow gives birth, milk production increases to a peak level that a good producer can sustain for months. “If she holds it for five or six months, she’s a hell of a cow,” says Dennis Clay who has been around cattle his whole life. He was raised on Sunnybrook Farm in Hartford, owned his own dairy farm in the Jericho District for a time, and then bought Sunnybrook Farm from his brothers in 2002 after their father died.

Clay explains that a cow’s production declines after this peak period until she finally stops giving milk for a couple months. Ideally, this will be during the summer when milk prices are lowest. “I always tried to have a fall herd,” he says. “I wanted my cows to give birth from August through November so you get the most milk production when prices are highest.”

When a cow came into heat between sixty and ninety days after giving birth, Clay would breed her again. “That’s how you make the most money,” he says. “My calving interval was just a little over a year. I had thirty-one cows that had a calf almost every twelve months.”

Dennis Clay gave every calf a name, and each one had a disposition on a six-point scale from docile to very aggressive. The most aggressive animal Clay remembers was a registered Jersey bull named Rocky. “I don’t want to be mean about an animal but you could see the fire in his eyes,” he says. “His eyes were almost always red.

“My father always had a border collie to help with the cows. He had several and each was called Towser. It took my father and the dog and sometimes another person to move Rocky out in the yard so we could clean his pen. Then, you couldn’t get him back in. He’d turn around and face you. He wasn’t scared of hell or high water.

*Dennis Clay grew up on his father’s dairy farm and had a gift for working with cows. Here he pets a whiteface Hereford after he sold his dairy herd and raised beef cattle. Clay named all his cows. On the right is Theresa, the offspring of a registered Angus bull and a half-Angus mother named Thelma. “Most of my cows were like pets,” he says.*

*Continued on page 3.*

## From the Editor . . .

My neighbor J.S. Dow told me that Dennis Clay of Sunnybrook Farm has a knack for working with cows and other farm creatures. Not knowing much about cows, I pressed Dennis to give me some insight and you'll find it in this issue.

I first heard about Phineas Gage in a psychology class years ago. In 1848, Gage suffered a brain injury that ultimately helped convince the scientific community that human behavior has a biological basis in the brain. His case hits close to home since he grew up in Lebanon, NH and his accident was just down the road. The story is on pages six and seven.

The memory of George Washington Barnes lives on in scattered newspaper items from the late 1800s. He was known to many as the conductor on daily trains from White River Junction to Concord, NH. But in 1881, he was ordained as a minister and took the pulpit of a newly formed Universalist Church on Maple Street in White River Junction. He was there

for twenty months while continuing his long service with the railroad. In this issue, we piece together more of his story including his term on the Hartford School Board and his role in forming two local banks. Rev. Barnes was warmly remembered by *The Landmark* when he passed in 1892.

Preparing this issue, I met one of the residents of the former Universalist Church, which is now a four-unit apartment building. He knew it had been a church but I was able to tell him the building also served as an Odd Fellows hall and was the scene of many lively functions over the years. We marveled that the building still exists and he seemed to have a new appreciation for his home. Then I drove to Hartford Cemetery and located the graves of Rev. Barnes and his family. Our article is just a glimpse of his life, and we couldn't find a photo, but I hope you enjoy meeting him.

*Scott Fletcher, Editor*

## Equinimity

*New Orleans County Monitor*, March 8, 1875

Mr. Theron O. Bailey of Montpelier has a horse that "knows a thing or two." It was standing on the western side of the old Pavilion, one day of week before last, when a blast was exploded on the eastern side where the excavation for the new wing is being made. A large timber placed over the fuse was blown as high as the eaves and the pulverized earth, which had been frozen fifteen inches deep, was carried over the building, falling upon the horse and sleigh like a shower of hail. The animal did not start and run as we expected but, after a few seconds of reflection, carefully turned round with the sleigh and took a quiet walk across the street to the doorway of the Central Depot so as to give the next blast a wider berth. Most equines would under similar circumstances have made a bee-line towards North Montpelier.

### 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 Historical Society

Post Office Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

<http://www.hartfordvthistory.com>

[info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com)

802-296-3132

### Board Members and Officers

Jim Kenison—Board Chair	603-540-4591
Judy Barwood—President	802-295-2435
Pat Stark—Secretary	802-280-2221
Peggy McDerment—Treasurer	802-295-2357
Carole Haehnel—Board Member	802-295-3974
Pat Rondeau—Board Member	603-675-6612

<b>Program Director</b>	Mary Nadeau	802-295-2123
<b>Museum Director</b>	Vacant	
<b>Curator/Archivist</b>	Pat Stark	802-280-2221
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Scott Fletcher	310-730-5051
<b>Print &amp; Web Design</b>	Scott Fletcher	310-730-5051
<b>Facebook Admin</b>	Jim Kenison	603-540-4591
<b>Long Range Planning</b>	Judy Barwood	802-295-2435
<b>Lawn/Snow Plow</b>	Frank Weigel	
<b>GenCenter Director</b>	Carole Haehnel	802-295-3974
<b>Genealogist</b>	Carole Haehnel	802-295-3974



“In the fall of 1962, we had a cow in heat and we always put the cow out in the field before the bull. When a cow is in heat, she can be kind of stubborn so I was trying to pull her out there with a rope when I realized my father had let Rocky out in the field. I panicked when I heard him bellow and saw him coming toward me. I ran for the barn where I could smash the window and pull myself out, but my father yelled for the dog and he came in the gate, made two bounces, and grabbed the bull by the back of the leg. I got out through the barn door but, if it wasn’t for him, Rocky could have killed me.

“I’ll never forget when dad sold Rocky. When the man picked him up he said, ‘Do you have a grain bag so I can lead him into the truck?’ And my dad said, ‘You’re an idiot if you going to try to lead that bull.’ But we gave him a grain sack that he folded and put on Rocky so he couldn’t see. Then he took him by the nose ring and led him into the truck.”

After learning the dairy business on his father’s farm, Dennis Clay leased an old dairy farm in the Jericho District. “In 1972, I moved up to what had been the Nott farm,” he says. After a member of the Nott family decided to return to farming, Clay bought a sixteen-acre field nearby and built a new house and barn. Then he leased some additional pasture.

“I decided I wanted registered cattle,” Clay says. So, he sold all but the registered Jerseys in his herd and bought seventeen Jerseys from a farm in Cornish, NH. Then Clay studied cattle breeding and enrolled in a program to learn about artificial insemination. “It was a crash course,” he recalls. “You learn to find the cow’s cervix.” He says that this can be difficult for both the cow and the breeder, and brings a fair chance of getting kicked.

“Then you insert the straw gun into the cervix. There are four little ridges and you are looking for the third

*At left, Sunnybrook Farm in Hartford in 1945 when Dennis Clay’s parents purchased the property. Dennis Clay’s father had a succession of Border Collies that were all named Towser. Dennis says Towser IV, above, saved his life when he grabbed an angry bull by the leg.*

one. You don’t want to go through the cervix because then you’re in the Fallopian tubes. I used to go to the end, and then back one ridge. Then you push the semen through the straw.”

Clay located a company in Ohio that supplied frozen Jersey semen. “You are looking for certain characteristics in the bull as well as in its parents and offspring,” he says. “You want the calf to have a tight udder, a straight back line across the top of their hips, and the leg angle has to be perfect.”

When Dennis Clay spent a hundred dollars for an ampule of semen, his father said, “You must think you’re rich.” But it paid off. Clay was soon able to sell registered Jerseys for good prices all over New England. He also sent a few heifers for sale in California almost every year. The last year Clay inseminated his Jerseys, he succeeded with twenty-seven out of thirty-one cows.

Clay is particularly proud of one calf that achieved a rating of Excellent, which means that the total score of all her traits exceeded ninety out of a hundred possible points. “If you could draw what a perfect cow should look like, she would have been it,” he says.

In 1987, Clay saw the dairy business getting more difficult for small farms and put his herd up for auction. They sold for over eight hundred dollars apiece and went to every state in New England. He says he didn’t have to sell, and doesn’t regret it, but it was a tough day. “Probably the hardest day’s work I ever did in my life,” he says.

After his father Laurence died, Dennis Clay moved



back to Sunnybrook Farm and continued tending his father's dairy herd.

"My oldest son did haying and had a herd of Holsteins," he says. "One winter, he sold his Holsteins and decided to use snow machines to bring them down from a pasture on Johny Brook Road. I said, 'Dan, they haven't been out of that pasture all winter. They're not going to come down those roads and into our yard. If you'd been doing it on a regular basis they might follow you but, if you send them down the road all of a sudden, we're going to have cattle everywhere.' But he went up anyway, chased them with the snow machine, and finally got all but two in the corral. I said, 'If you give me four or five days, I'll have them calmed down.'

"Well, I went up there with some grain and a little second cut hay. When they saw me and hid in some woods so I said, 'Well girls, I'm coming back tomorrow. Finally, one came out from the trees and I said, 'I'm not going to hurt you. Why don't you come out?' But they didn't move so I left the grain and hay by the gate.

"The second morning, the feed was gone so we were on the right track. On the next morning, one of them was waiting for me and she came over and ate out of the bucket. Then, the other one came and stood about thirty feet away. I held out the bucket but she wouldn't come any closer. I talked to her a bit and then made two piles of grain and walked out. On the fourth day, they were back with the herd.

One year, Clay had to wrangle an Angus bull named Huey down from the woods on the hill above the farm. "My son came and said, 'Dad, your critter is up on Joe Ranger Road.' So I took a bucket with some grain and went up and called him and brought him slowly through the woods. I had to take the fence down at one point. Once, Huey started kind of barreling because he liked grain so I said, 'Huey, slow your butt down.' He slowed down, I gave him some grain, and got him home."

After being a dairy farmer most of his life, Dennis Clay raised beef cattle in recent years. "I had a registered Angus herd until five years ago and Angus can be feisty," he says. "A neighbor from Pomfret brought a bull over in June and put it the pasture with my cattle. I forgot about it until we started having calves in February. One calf was born February 8 and it was nine degrees below zero. I was out there at 9:30 at night and put some square bales of hay around to make a little pen for her and her mother. The mother was named Tania and I called the calf Tiffany.

"When the calf was two days old, she started licking my glove and I said, 'Wait a minute here. If you want to lick my glove, I'm going to pet you. The first time I touched her she jumped away, but she was fascinated with that glove so I'd wiggle it and she'd come over and finally let me pet her and scratch her throat. Before I got through, I could lead that calf without putting a rope on her.

"Tiffany was just a month or two old when I decided to sell my Angus herd to a man from Fairlee. That was hard. We put the cattle out in the yard and the buyer started putting the cane to them. I said, 'Don't put the cane to those cows,' but they were already spooked. I thought they were going to clear the fence.

"The guy said, 'Well I haven't got all day.' I said, 'You can leave right now because you're not going to put the cane to these cattle.' This calf Tiffany was amazing. She was all spooked up. I said, 'Tiffany come here.' I got some grain and she nibbled on a little bit.

Then I got a bucket and said, 'Tiffany, you've got to show your mother and the rest of them that you're a big girl. You're going to jump up in this trailer.' Then I led Tiffany and her mother and a couple others over, patted her on the butt a little bit, and she jumped up on the trailer. Then the rest of them followed.

"I went up to see them a year later because I thought about buying Tiffany back but he'd sold her. I wondered if she'd remember me. If you have a dog, they know who you are, your mannerisms, and how you move. A cow is no different.

"I feel like, if you're going to have an animal, be decent to them," says Clay. "Take your time with them. Be consistent with your mannerisms, and your voice, and with feeding. It makes things better for everyone."



*This Jersey was a few days from calving and had to be milked since her full udder made it hard to walk. Dennis Clay bred his dairy cows every year and timed it so they would give birth in the fall. This increased milk production in the spring when prices were high.*



---

## White River Junction was the Place for the State Fair



*Fashionable visitors arrive at the Vermont State Fair in 1908. The train spur from White River Junction was built in 1890. Train fare was ten cents. Photo courtesy of Jay Barrett.*

*The Landmark* ran the following editorial on December 6, 1889.

“The locating committee of the Vermont State Fair Association and president George W. Hooker of Brattleboro came here last Friday afternoon. The committee consisted of J.C. Parker of Quechee, H.G. Root of Bennington, and Henry Chase of Lyndon. The favorable location of St. Johnsbury and the chance for larger gate receipts were pointed out to the committee.

“No vote was taken, but some of the committee were frank enough to say that they considered White River Junction a better location, and if the fair did not go there it would undoubtedly come here.

“Now why not stir round and get the committee to locate the fair at the Junction? There is hardly another point in the state where the attendance would be larger. So far as local accommodations are concerned, our village could give all that is required. Holding the fair here would be a benefit not only to the Junction but to the whole county.

“Simply from a financial point of view, the gain would be such that certainly every man in the village and adjacent localities ought to be willing to labor for the desired move. Talk or resolutions are not going to bring the fair to the Junction. Mere wishes will not accomplish anything. If we want the fair located here, we must work hard to get it. It can be made a success too, just as well at the Junction as anywhere else.

“Those of our people who are public-spirited, wide awake, quick to catch-on to anything that will pay

well, must take the matter in hand. There are always ‘croakers’ enough to discourage, if they are listened to, and ‘kickers’ who oppose any project that they think will not pay them better than all others or that involves any expenditure of money without clear prospect of a big dividend. As regards this business, there is no time to listen to ‘croakers’ or ‘kickers.’ Let us all to whom the result to be reached seems feasible and a public advantage, take off our coats, figuratively speaking, and acquit ourselves like men. If the point can be carried, work should not stop until White River Junction is selected as the location for the state fair.”

Fair organizers J.C. Parker, George W. Smith, and J.L. Bacon offered shares in the venture for twenty-five dollars each and quickly raised twelve thousand dollars. On January 30, the locating committee approved the following motion. “That the Vermont State fair in 1890 be located at White River Junction provided a railroad track be seasonably built to connect the Woodstock Railroad with the proposed fairground site, and provided further that said site be so enlarged as to allow the construction of a one-mile trotting course.”

Frederick Billings of Woodstock helped build the rail spur and the new fairgrounds were named *Billings Park* in his honor. In turn, Billings exhibited his prize Jersey cattle, Southdown sheep, and Berkshire swine. The first Vermont State Fair in White River Junction opened to thousands of visitors on September 9, 1890. Frederick Billings died on September 30.

---

## Phineas Gage Makes Medical History

### **HORRIBLE ACCIDENT**

Phineas P. Gage, a foreman on the Rutland Railroad at Cavendish, was preparing for a blast on Wednesday last, when the powder exploded, carrying through his head an iron instrument, an inch and a fourth in circumference, and three feet and eight inches in length. The iron entered on the side of his face, shattering the upper jaw, and passing back of the left eye. and out at the top of his head. Singularly enough, he was alive at two o'clock the next afternoon, in full possession of his reason, and free from pain. *Middlebury Register*, September 26, 1848

The amazing story of Phineas Gage is still told in psychology classes to explain how the brain works. In 1848, Gage suffered a gruesome accident that removed the front left portion of his brain. This occurred just down the road in Cavendish, VT and word was sent to the widow Hannah Gage in Lebanon, NH that her oldest son would probably not survive. When Hannah arrived in Cavendish, Dr. John Harlow was still dressing astonishing wounds below her son's jaw and on the top of his head. But Gage was alert, able to walk, and expressed little pain.

As Phineas Gage improbably recovered at his mother's home, his case came to the attention of the medical community. First, he had survived a devastating injury. Second, this was one of the first times an injury to the brain could be associated with changes in behavior and personality. Before the accident, Gage had been steady, smart, and capable. After the accident, however, he seemed far different to his friends.

At the time of the accident, little was known about the anatomy of the brain or how it functioned. To Dr. Harlow, this suggested that personality and behavior resides in areas of the brain. He wrote a detailed case study of Gage's injury, his treatment, and the changes in his personality but chose not to publish this while



*This photo of Phineas Gage and his iron tamping rod is originally from the collection of Jack and Beverly Wilgus, and is now in the Warren Anatomical Museum, Harvard Medical School.*

Gage was still alive.

In November 1849, Gage accepted an invitation to see Professor Henry J. Bigelow of Harvard who examined him, shaved his head, made a plaster cast, and wrote a second description of the accident and recovery, which appeared in the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*.

"The main feature of this case," wrote Dr. Bigelow, "is its improbability." Bigelow reported how Gage had sat upright in a cart while being driven home after the accident and how he conversed with those around him. Bigelow went on to describe Gage's physical recovery at his mother's home, but he chose not to include

changes in personality reported by Dr. Harlow. Bigelow's training caused him to reject the possibility that the injury to Phineas Gage's brain could impact his personality and behavior.

Phineas Gage lived twelve years after the accident. He spent several years driving a stagecoach in Chile, which is given as evidence that he was able to handle taxing physical and emotional demands. Eventually, though, his health failed and he moved to San Francisco, CA where his mother now lived.

Phineas Gage died in 1860 of an epileptic seizure that was likely related to his accident. After his death, Dr. Harlow published his account of the profound



*The carefully-examined skull of Phineas Gage on display at the Warren Anatomical Museum in Boston, MA. Credit Van Horn JD, Irimia A, Torgerson CM, Chambers MC, Kikinis R (2012) Mapping Connectivity Damage in the Case of Phineas Gage.*

changes in Gage's personality that made clear his belief that the injury to the frontal portion of Gage's brain had significantly altered his behavior. The following is a brief excerpt.

"The equilibrium or balance, so to speak, between his intellectual faculties and animal propensities, seems to have been destroyed. He is fitful, irreverent, indulging at times in the grossest profanity (which was not previously his custom), manifesting but little deference for his fellows, impatient of restraint or advice when it conflicts with his desires, at times pertinaciously obstinate, yet capricious and vacillating, devising many plans of future operations, which are no sooner arranged than they are abandoned in turn for others appearing more feasible. A child in his intellectual capacity and manifestations, he has the animal passions of a strong man. Previous to his injury, although untrained in the schools, he possessed a well-balanced mind, and was looked upon by those who knew him as a shrewd, smart business man, very energetic and persistent in executing all his plans of operation. In this regard, his mind was radically changed, so decidedly that his friends and acquaintances said he was, 'no longer Gage.'"

Dr. Harlow's view of the accident eventually prevailed among brain scientists and the case of Phineas Gage is still used to show how physicians first began to understand the biological basis of human behavior. His demanding work in Chile has been described as an early example of the benefits of structured rehabilitation. After his death, Gage's family provided his skull, and the tamping iron that passed through it, for further study and they are on display at the Warren Anatomical Museum in Boston, MA.

---

## **ALIVE FROM THE DEAD, ALMOST**

*North Star*, November 6, 1848

Some of our readers may recollect the case of Mr. Phineas Gage, who was injured, supposed mortally, while blasting rocks at Cavendish, some four or five weeks since. On Wednesday evening, the 18th instant, we conversed, with a gentleman who lives in that town, and who states that when he left, on Monday evening, the 16th, Mr. Gage was not only living, but bade fair to continue alive and to some extent comfortable for a considerable time yet. By the explosion of a charge in the rock, an iron bar 3 feet 9 inches in length, and 1 1/4 inch in diameter, not in circumference, as some of the papers had it, was forced quite through his head, and passing upward a considerable way, fell on a spot where it was picked up the next day. Striking him on the face, just below the cheek bone, it forced itself through the skull near the top of the head, passing directly through what phrenologists call the organ of veneration. When picked up it was found to be actually greased with the matter of the brain.

Mr. Gage, upon meeting with the accident, got into the cart and rode home, first telling a man who was at work with him to be there the next day, as he should be there! Arrived at the house, he walked up one flight of stairs to his chamber. Word was immediately sent to his mother, who lived thirty miles off in New Hampshire, as nobody imagined he could live after what had befallen him. The physicians on dressing the wound, found the fractures of the skull to be fearful. The wound bled freely, which tended to prevent inflammation, and portions of the substance of the brain, intermixed with the blood, kept falling into the throat, causing vomiting.

Mr. Gage is an unmarried man, some twenty-six or thirty years of age. What is very remarkable is that he has been able to converse ever since his accident, and has in great part retained his reason. He desired to have his mother sent for. As she came, having been told what had happened, she had not the least expectation of finding him alive. This case is probably the most remarkable one on record. If read for the first time, it would appear ludicrously absurd. But ...



---

## George W. Barnes

### Railroad Conductor, Pastor, and Bank Director

In 1881, George Washington Barnes of White River Junction was ordained as a minister of the Universalist Church. After delivering sermons at Universalist services and meetings around Vermont, he replaced William E. Copeland as Universalist pastor in White River Junction. Barnes also worked as a conductor on the Northern Division of the Boston & Lowell Railroad and made daily trips from White River Junction to Concord, NH.

The First Universalist Society of White River Junction was organized in May, 1878. A constitution was adopted and officers were elected. The first pastor was J.C. Farnsworth. The society completed and dedicated a building on Maple Street in June, 1879.

The parent organization of Universalist churches in America was the Universalist General Convention, founded in 1866. The church joined with the American Unitarian Association in 1966 to form the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The defining doctrine of Universalism is universal salvation. Universalists reject the idea of hell and believe all of the world's religions offer paths to God. For evil-doers, there was perhaps a period of punishment after death, but it was not eternal.

*The Landmark* says that Universalist sermons covered a wide range of social issues such as temperance, ordination of women, separation of church and state, and women's suffrage. Twenty local families attended the White River Church. One member was Lydia Pingree, wife of former Vermont governor Samuel Pingree.

Rev. Barnes stepped down from the pulpit in White River Junction in October 1882 but continued to preach in other churches. *The Landmark* noted his departure on November 11, 1882. "Rev. G.W. Barnes having closed his labors with the Universalist Society, has gone away in pursuit of another field, it is to be presumed. His services continued twenty months, and by his genial and cheerful disposition he made many warm friends and we doubt not that his staunch temperance principles, his upright daily walk and conversation and consistent Christian living have planted seeds in some hearts that will grow into fruitfulness as the years go by. The best wishes of his friends for prosperity and usefulness will go with him to whatever field he may be called to labor in."

In January 1883, a fire broke out in the White River Junction freight depot where Rev. Barnes stored his

books. They were destroyed as *The Landmark* stated on January 13. "The library of Rev. G.W. Barnes was burned in the freight depot at the late fire. Its proprietor don't believe in hell but his library experienced one."

G. W. Barnes preached several times at the Unity Church in Stowe before deciding to fill the pulpit there in January, 1883. At that time, Rev. Barnes' son, G.F.

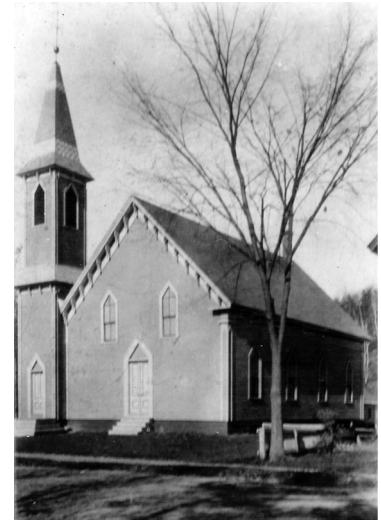
Barnes, was the Universalist pastor in Wolcott, VT.

Rev. Barnes continued to live in White River Junction where his friends hosted a benefit for him after he lost his books and other valuables in the fire. The dinner raised twenty-five dollars. Barnes also continued to work as a conductor until retiring from the railroad in 1884 after thirty-five years of service.

In 1885, Rev. Barnes was elected to the Hartford School Board. When George Gates, George W. Smith, and Ephraim Morris founded the National Bank of White River Junction in 1886, stockholders chose Rev. Barnes as a director. He resigned the following year.

In 1888, Rev. Barnes was named auditor of the Hartford School Board. In 1891, *The Landmark* reported that Rev. Barnes had installed electric lights in his residence.

In August 1892, Rev. Barnes joined another group of prominent Hartford citizens including Alfred E. Watson, Horace Pease, and former governor Pingree to form a new bank in town. But the busy life of Rev. Barnes was nearing its end. On November 18, 1892, *The Landmark* said, "Geo. W. Barnes who had been ill but a short time, died at his home in this village Wednesday morning. The deceased was a man of sterling qualities, a most exemplary and highly respected citizen, and by his death, the community loses one of its honored residents."



*The Universalist Church, later an Odd Fellows hall, now houses apartments.*

## Susie Evarts of Windsor, VT Captures 1908 Vermont State Fair Tilting Crown

One of the featured events at the 1908 Vermont State Fair in White River Junction was a tilting tournament in which contestants on horseback tried to spear three-inch rings suspended from poles along the track in front of the grandstand. There were three rings, spaced one hundred feet apart. The competitors, included six men and a young woman named Susie Evarts from Windsor, VT. Each entrant had three tries in which to skewer the most rings while riding at a full gallop.

The first tournament was won by Frederick Lee of Baltimore, MD. In the second tournament, however, Susie Evarts thrilled the crowd by capturing a total of five rings, including a perfect three rings in one dash. Miss Evarts received thunderous applause from spectators for her plucky riding.

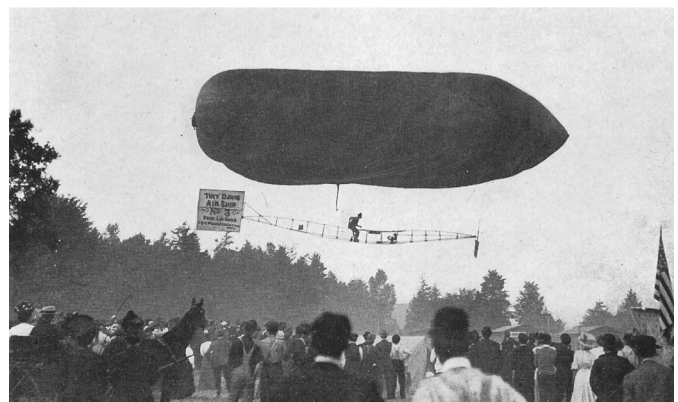
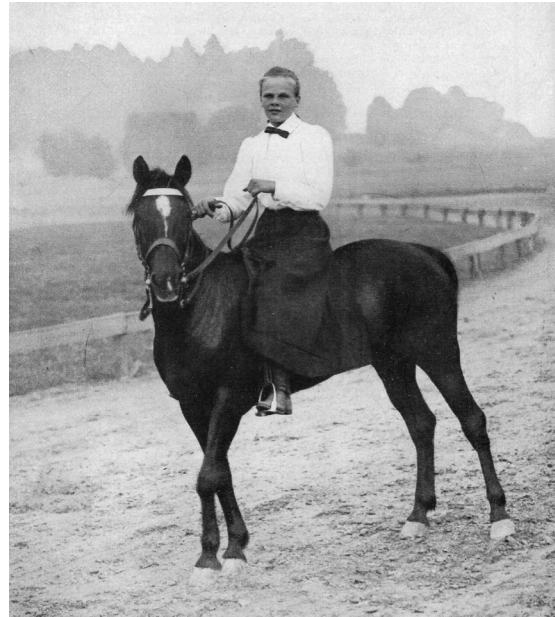
After the tilting tournament, Miss Evarts rode the same seventeen year-old horse in a quarter mile race where she defeated two male competitors. Susie received another ovation and was mentioned in newspapers throughout the state.

Another attraction at the fair was a polo demonstration in which a four-man team from Boston twice defeated a squad from New York City. Spectators marveled at the fast pace of the sport, which required each player to use several horses.

The 1908 Vermont State Fair also introduced an automobile competition in which a prize was awarded to the city or town displaying the five best motor cars. Some one hundred and forty automobiles formed a single line and sped across the fairgrounds in front of the grandstand. The town of Barre won a cup for its team of five Cadillacs. The fair also featured the first parking area for automobiles, which reportedly held as many as one hundred and forty five cars at one time.

The *Bethel Courier* expressed disappointment at the attempts of a dirigible to fly above the fairgrounds. On the first day, the craft made three attempts to take off but only rose about one hundred feet. The second day brought a single flight to a height of about two hundred feet. "It was a fizzle in the superlative sense," noted the *Courier*.

The Y.M.C.A. served over four thousand people in its rest tent at the fair. There was also a nursery tent where volunteers minded children while their mothers enjoyed displays, and a hospital tent where doctors and nurses cared for seventy-four patients, some of whom required urgent attention.



*Top, Susie Evarts snatched one more ring than the top male competitor in the second of two tilting contests at the 1908 Vermont State Fair. Miss Evarts was the daughter of State Fair president Maxwell Evarts. Middle, tilting contestants prepare to compete. Bottom, the dirigible of Professor Joseph La Roux barely cleared the hilltops around the fairgrounds.*





## Infallible Plan

*Rutland Weekly Herald*, February 11, 1886

“I’ve heard of women wearing men's clothes and being so sleek about it that they go a long while without being detected,” said the conductor, as he glanced at the passengers reclining in their seats, “But let me tell you, I've got a rule that catches 'em every time on my train. No woman can masquerade as a man if she rides with me. I've got an infallible plan for detecting their little game, and it works to a charm.” “How do you manage to discover their secret?” “By watching their feet. If anything wearing men's clothes fails to put its feet upon the seat in a railway train, we immediately conclude that something is wrong and telegraph ahead for an officer.” Strange to say, fourteen passengers in male attire at once took their feet off the company's upholsterings.

## Thank You HHS Supporters!

### PATRONS

*Schaal Electric*  
*Meeting House Restoration*  
*Rockwood Land Services, LLC*  
*Dorothy & Schuyler Borst*  
*Heather Craig & Brian Chaboyer*

### BUSINESS MEMBERS

*Aurora Day Care*  
*C&G Creative Catering*  
*Ennis Construction*  
*Heart to Home LLC*  
*Sabil & Sons Inc.*  
*Studio Nexus*  
*Bailey/Howe Library at UVM*  
*Cloverleaf Jewelers & Gifts*

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate/Business: \$50 \_\_\_ Patron: \$100 \_\_\_ Benefactor: \$250 \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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!



## Yesterday's News

### **General Approval** *The Landmark*, June 21, 1884

At the evening session, ex-Senator Oglesby of Illinois addressed the convention. He referred to Gen. Grant and the doubt under which he now suffered. "God grant, said the speaker, "that the sun of personal popularity may soon burst through the cloud of misfortune that now hangs over the name of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. God grant that this cloud may pass away and that honor may come back to him." When the speaker mentioned the name of Gen. Grant, the audience sprang to their feet and cheered lustily for several minutes.

### **What the Freshmen Knew** *The Landmark*, February 24, 1927

In a western school one of the results from a "freshman intelligence test" was the following interesting information.

An oxygen is an eight-sided figure.

Nero means absolutely nothing.

Homer is a type of pigeon.

Ulysses S. Grant was a tract of land upon which several battles of the Civil War were fought.

A quorum is a place to keep fish.

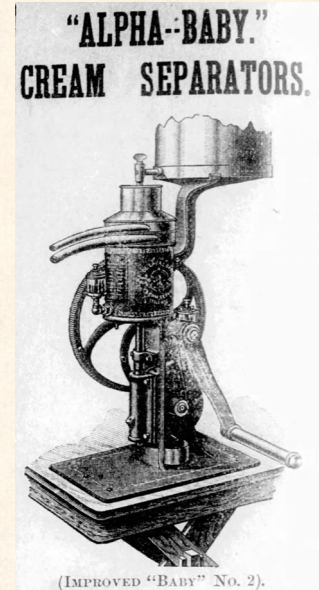
A vegetarian is a horse doctor.

Radium is a new kind of silk.

Henry Clay is a mud treatment for the face.

Mussolini is a patent medicine.

Flora and Fauna are a couple of chorus girls.



*The Landmark*, May 21, 1897

### **Who's Complaining?** *The Landmark*, March 18, 1882

People about the depot complain of an unbearable stillness thereabouts o' nights. Joe Lovejoy has the mumps.

### **Dark Deed** *The Landmark*, May 17, 1884

Some sneak thieves who couldn't find anything better to do broke all three of the lamps in the White River Bridge last Friday night. We think they ought to be glad to have lights in such places.

### **Period** *The Vermont Journal*, June 29, 1789

Last Thursday evening, as Mr. John Boutwell was riding through the street in West Hartford, his horse stumbled and falling on him, put a period to his life in about an hour.

### **An Excellent Location** *Rutland Herald*, September 12, 1935

The long controversy is over. White River Junction has been chosen as the site of a veterans' hospital to cost not to exceed \$400,000. White River Junction seems to be an ideal location for such an institution. It is virtually the geographical center of Vermont and New Hampshire which means it will be easily accessible to veterans from both states. How much it will benefit the community remains to be seen but it is to be hoped the village will directly profit from the construction, with local labor employed on the project insofar as possible.

### **They Never Forgot This Face** *The Landmark*, May 6, 1882

There was a hat to be presented to the handsomest man at the Junction, which elicited a spirited contest between the friends of Leon D. Hurd and Arthur Pierce the engineer of the Junction House. Pierce, however, easily got 100 votes to his opponent's 32. People who never saw Mr. Hurd may form some idea of his looks when we tell them that Professor Pierce looks if he had been drawn with a stump machine from the four quarters of the earth, and his various members nailed on to him with a hammer; he has to get up nights and rest his face, he looks so.

## Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547

Hartford, VT 05047-0547

*Return Service Requested*

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 15  
HARTFORD, VT



### HHS Calendar

**THE GARIPAY HOUSE MUSEUM is open by appointment only. Please call 802/296-3132 or email us at [info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.org). Phones/email are checked twice a week.**

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

**Wednesday, September 13, 2023** - “**County Fairs.**” Presented by Steve Taylor. 7:00 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ; 1721 Maple St., Hartford Village.

**Wednesday, November 8, 2023** - “**Turnpikes and Taverns in the Upper CT River Valley.**” Presented by Jay Barrett. 7:00 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ; 1721 Maple St., Hartford Village.

The **Genealogy Center** on the second floor of the Hartford Library is open Fridays from 2-6 p.m. and by appointment. Please call Carole Haehnel at 802/295-3974 or email her at: [chaehnel151@comcast.net](mailto:chaehnel151@comcast.net). Interested in helping residents explore their family histories? Please contact us at [info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com).

### Websites

**Hartford Historical Society:** <http://www.hartfordvthistory.com/>

**HHS Membership Form:** <https://hartfordvthistory.com/contact/membership/>

**Hartford VT Historical Society Facebook Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hartfordvthistory>

**Hartford History Timeline:** <https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1456118/History-of-Hartford-Vermont/>

**Very Vermont - Stories from the Green Mountains:** <https://veryvermont.exposure.co/very-vermont>