

The Hartland Historical Society

PO Box 297 - 14 Rte 12

Hartland, VT 05048



HARTLAND BAND LATE 1800' S

Benjamin Harlow, having sold his place here, is at present with his family at Mr. Parkers, his son-in-law, at W. Windsor

J.A. McArthur, having bought a place of B. Harlow, is repairing and will move in as soon as convenient.

A.M. Leonard returned to Dedham, Mass. This last Monday. He was band leader at the county fair at Woodstock.

Miss Clara L. Shedd , teacher of piano forte at Wellesley College, went to Boston last week.

Farmers about here are improving the opportunity to sell cider apples. Mr. Kinary of Windsor is buying and shipping them by railroad.

Rev. Mr. Simmons of Woodstock preached at the Universalist church last Sunday at 2 o'clock P.M.. The attendance was large.

Aurin Luce is building an addition to his house for a back kitchen and wood house. Herb Small is the carpenter.

An "experience " sociable and dance was held at the town hall Tuesday evening , Oct. 2nd, which was well patronized and all had a good time.

Fred Whitney recently went to Keene, N.H. on his bicycle. He started for home in the morning and reached here a little after noon.

A grand rehearsal of the orchestra was held at James Leonard's house Sunday all day and evening, Sept. 30. The instrumentation was as follows: five violins, one viola, one double bass, one flute, two clarinets, one cornet and one trombone. Overtures were practiced and played finely. There was a large audience in the afternoon. A splendid supper was given by Mr. Leonard's people.

Miss Alice Shedd is prepared to serve customers with the latest styles of millinery goods at reasonable prices.

The funeral of Miss Harriet Lamb was held at the house Sept 28. Rev. Margraff of Bellows Falls delivered a fine discourse.

(Please notice how many of the news items refer to musical events. Music, dancing, and performances were of great importance in "days of yore" as I hope you will see by the articles picked from assorted sources.)

Churches provided the most frequent exposure to music.

The singing church of Hartland has had short times of depression as well as long years of prosperity, but even when singers were few, the faithful souls of the listeners,----the real singing church,-kept the song of Gods love forever in their hearts, and that is our heritage today .

Looking back over the years to the first churches in town, and recalling the names of members of the choirs, we are reminded of Longfellow's words:

*"God sent his singers upon earth'
With songs of sadness and mirth'
That they might touch the hearts of men'
And bring them back to Heaven again."*

The old Universalist church at the Four Corners, that stood on the right side of the road as you go toward Walter Royce's (Mace Hill Rd.. on Connie Tessier's land, beyond and other side from Cobb Hill,) was a very large, brick structure, built in 1822, with galleries on three sides. It was torn down in later years and a new, modern church, called The Chapel, was built. But in this old colonial building there was not only a choir but an orchestra. Harriet Lamb used to walk all the way from her house, trailing her black silk dress and wearing her lace mitts, bonnet, and mantilla. The Marble girls also sang, walking every Sunday from their house near the mouth of Lull Brook, 2 1/2 miles to the church. In summer they wore low-necked muslin or dimity dresses, with black lace wraps over their shoulders, and often the hot sun beating down would print the pattern of the lace on their delicate necks and shoulders.

My grandfather, (this was written by Florence Sturtevant) Cullen Sturtevant used to play the clarinet, and his brother, George the bass viol, or cello, and their sisters, Eveline and Sarah Ann, were among the singers. The gallery where the singers sat often contained 50 singers, and the average congregation was about 200... (imagine!!!)

In later years, at the new church, Frank Leonard, with his noble and beautiful basso

profundo voice, was one of our finest musicians.

At the Methodist church Sanford Shepard sang for a long time and Charles Backus was the leading bass singer in the different churches for many years.

At the Congregational church, John and Dan Webster sang and Marshall Harlow played the organ for a long period of time. (Personal anecdote from Florence " Father wrote in his diary one Sunday "Went to church today. After 40 years of service I was asked not to sing " New regime , out with the old").

Perhaps the one who left the most lasting impression upon the town by the generous gift of her musical talents is Mrs. Jennie Keyes Fuller of Brooklyn, N.Y. She had studied in Boston and had sung and played in concerts for many years. A devoted member of the Methodist church, both in Brooklyn and in her native town of Hartland, she spent nearly every summer here as long as she lived and always delighted to get up concerts and musical affairs. Once she put on the opera of "Pinafore".Singers of all faiths were happy to have a part in anything she directed. .

Mr. Lyn Shedd was in great demand at all musical gatherings. He conducted a singing school that was of great benefit to the young singers of the town. Mr. Shedd lived , as I remember him, in the house where Mrs. Bowers now lives (Flower Farm) I have been told that in his youth he had a high, sweet, lyric tenor voice. He sang in all the churches, at one time and another, and of course was always in demand to sing on special occasions. Added to this, he was well versed in the science of music, and in his later years used to hold singing schools in the hall in the upper part of his house, and in the Methodist church and elsewhere. He had a peculiar, drawling speech, and the young folk used to make fun of him. When he said "sing it agane" it set them to laughing, and when the boys and girls on the back seat got to giggling too much, he would say, "Don't laff. Silly to laff" That set them off all the more. But he knew his stuff, as the saying goes, and we learned to read music.

Clara Shedd, Lyns daughter, Mrs Charles Backus, inherited her father's musical ability and studied the piano in Boston where she was often engaged as accompanist (The Historical Society has her published, original music but those who have played it declare it to be pretty awful.)

Irving Heminway, another outstanding musician, studied music in Boston and Paris, and was a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.. From Lillian Marcott's book "Looking Back While Going Ahead " "Irving was born Nov.. 17 1865 (in Hartland) As a young man he played a clarinet very well. He did so well that before he was too old he went to Paris to study to become a musician, playing and studying in France, Germany, Turkey and Italy, but I think he liked Paris best and I believe he thought they had the best musicians.

When he returned home, J. Howard Flower writes in his article "Memories of Former Times in the Four Corners", speaking of his appearance after returning says "When I first saw him, at one of the large dances at the town hall, each cheek a bright red spot there was a dashing moustache - -----A handsome man, as the pictures show" Irving played both in Sousa's Band and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It was around the turn of the century that he played in some orchestra during the summer up in the White Mountains and in Boston during the winter. He played around the country; at the Woodstock Inn and a few times at Greenville, Maine, where he probably got his first taste of the Maine woods (Where he spent his last years, fulfilling his love for the outdoors) He was thought to be one of the best clarinetists in America.

Ed Perkins was an all-round musician, who assisted in many ways in furnishing music here , and conducted a singing school. One of his brothers, W.O. Perkins , published a singing book, and another played before Queen Victoria.

Mary H. Steele was trained in music and became a vocal teacher in Chicago. One of her pupils reached grand opera under her tutelage.

When I was a young girl some musicians from out of town came here and conducted a convention for a week at the Methodist church closing with a grand concert.

Note: We have much more that I want to share so I will continue this in the winter letter. Carol

From the book "Anna May - 82 Years in New England" by Julia Hunter we have the following description of entertainment in North Hartland during the early years of the 20th century. Anna May was born in 1895.

"There were many group activities. We used to have Friday night parties, a surprise party, or the Grange used to have parties and the Woodmen would have parties. Woodmen were like Elks or Knights of Columbus or something. It was a fraternal order. I imagine there's some of them still. And they would have public suppers you could go to and dance after or play cards or just spend an evening. And we kids could go and some one adult would take charge of us. We couldn't be left alone in a room. Not very well !! All ages. But we used to have awfully good times. And then in the homes, the farmers around would have what we call now an open house. They would have kitchen dances and have some of the natives around furnish the music. We'd all go on straw rides. Get to the farm and then we'd dance. Everybody'd bring part of the supper with them and eat before you come home. The Grange used to have suppers out of town. I can remember my father and mother would hitch up a wagon or sleigh, whichever season it was, and they'd take as many of the neighbors as they could to the dances and these parties. It was nothing to have a party Friday night and Saturday night both.....and our fathers and mothers go right along. We weren't like they are nowadays, mother and father stay home and worry. They were right there with you, having fun too.

My mother loved to dance. She had a little music in her and she could sing and she really enjoyed those things. She could go without my father and he didn't care. He'd stay home and take care of us if we weren't able to go. But everybody went in neighborhood groups.

We had Sing Outs, but there was no training to it. Everybody'd go and sing songs.

All of this brings us to our program with Adam Boyce,

" Sprightly Steps: Vermont's Contra and Square Dancing Tradition"

Saturday, Oct. 8 at 7 P.M. At Damon Hall . Program and refreshments are free !! Come and bring the kids !! Fun for all !!

From Adam " Description :

Early settlers may have frowned upon the merriment of dancing as "the work of the Devil" but the tradition found it's way to the Green Mountains nevertheless. From fancy balls or cotillions to kitchen junkets or tunks, people of all ages and backgrounds fell under the spell of the fiddle. Changes of musical styles and culture have made old-time dancing nearly extinct, but

some practitioners keep the old styles alive. A few live fiddle tunes are also played during the presentation.

The purpose of this presentation is to inspire communities to learn more about their own dance heritage, relive old memories of dancing, and, if possible, reestablish a dancing tradition in the community.

My bio: Adam R. Boyce is a tenth generation Vermonter and an eighth generation native of Williamstown. He is a fiddler, composer, piano player, contra dance prompter, and square dance caller, all of which came through his affiliation, starting in 1991, with the Ed Larkin Contra Dancers and fiddler Harold Luce of Chelsea. In addition to his music and dance interests, Boyce has served in several locally elected positions, including town moderator. He is actively involved with the Williamstown Historical Society, and is occasionally a Yankee humorist, listed with the Vermont Arts Council.



Don't miss this fun time !!!

Ruth Durphey Flanagan

We said goodbye to our beloved Ruth this past June and not a day goes by that I don't miss her knowledge, support and friendship. She taught this flatlander so much of Hartland's history from her great stores . The history that was so much a part of Ruth's life. This newsletter is especially appropriate at this time because many of Ruth's ancestors were a big part of music in Hartland. The article written by Florance Sturtevant (Ruth's Aunt) leaves out the fact that she and her sisters, Alice, and Helen (Ruth's mother) were among the best known singers of their time. Giving performances in many different locals. Wherever you see the name Sturtevant, you can be sure of a connection to Ruth.

We have received many donations in Ruth's memory and the society thanks you, one and all. Just before her death we received, on loan, the very old (we think around 1875) sign that was on the General Store (now the Yoga Center) that Ruth's grandfather ran for over 50 years. You may have seen it on display at the Yoga Center on July 4 . We will use some of the memory donations to buy the necessary materials to hang it. (It has special needs) and some day in the future, if it becomes ours, we will do whatever the experts recommend to preserve, stabilize or restore it. We are saving your donations to use in this endeavor .

Other acquisitions:

School Picture from Phyllis Bowers ' Many papers relating to Spear, Gates and Hadley families from Loomis Dana, 5 Parade photos of Aug. 16, 1913 celebration from Verdie Ayers Woods via Pauline W. Fullerton , Wedding invitations and bios of Sturtevant/ Durphey, Brothers/Slayton, Harding/Blackford, and Jones/Flanders from Sandra Harding, Bios of couples from invitations previously donated by Nancy Harding: Miller/Marble, Metz/Reed, Barrell/Evans, Hadley/Spear, James Rich 30th anniversary party, Ryder/Wood, Hemenway/Cabot, From Sandra Harding, Book "Anna May" by Julia A. Hunter from Beverly Lasure, spindle and shuttles from Ottauquechee Woolen Mill from Margot Smith, World War Mothers, Hartland Chapter #2 belonged to Hazel Howe from Laura Noel, Iron Plate from Rt. 5 , Three Corners bridge, "Built by McLintic Marshall Company Pittsburg, Pa. 1926 from Jay Boeri.

As always, your gifts are so appreciated. If you have something from Hartlands past, please don't toss it without asking us first. Even the smallest thing can be of great importance in saving the stories of our past.

We now have colored copies of the 1869 Beers and Soule map of Hartland for sale. The separate districts are in different colors, making it easier to trace the outlines of the District. We will be happy to mail one to you in a tube for \$6.00 or you can get one at H.H.S. for \$3. You may also buy calendars for \$8 here or at Damon Hall and \$10 mailed.. We have enclosed a form for you convenience.

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