

HARTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. 297 – 14 ROUTE 12

HARTLAND, VERMONT 05048

WWW.HARTLANDHISTORY.ORG

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010

HARTLAND LIBRARIES

With the recent 10th anniversary celebration of our beautiful library comes the question of the history of libraries in Hartland. Elizabeth Skelding presented a program to the historical society in 1962 and I will help myself to the facts present in her 19 page report.



Residence of Miss L.R. Sturtevant, Hartland. Where the Public Library is Kept. (165 Rte 5)

The early settlers in Hartland and the other middle grant towns came from an educated population. Most moved here from Mass. and Conn. where a public education was valued and being largely Protestant they were a literate group. What does being Protestant have to do with it??? Protestants were expected to read the bible on their own and not depend on the minister to read to them, and in fact, the first library appears to have been located in the first church in town. The “old black meeting- house”, in the center of town, which was built in 1778, had books that could be borrowed. When we think about it, it makes perfect sense. Everyone was expected to attend church. The sermons would take all morning, followed by a lunch and social hour recess before more sermons.

What a perfect time to exchange books and discuss what you had read. It would not be easy to acquire books in this “wilderness”; space on boats bringing families up the river would be sparse but whatever books you did manage to bring, would be welcomed for sharing. The Pastor would certainly have a library and in fact, we have many books that belonged to Rev. Daniel Breck – first settled parson in town. In an 1801 diary from Joel Winch he says” My father owned a share in the Meeting-House Library” It seems that there was a library association in the parish and reading material was purchased with the income from shares sold to members.

The first real record of an association not connected with the church comes in 1816 when a group of Hartland townsmen met and “ engaged to pay to a committee, hereafter to be appointed, the sum of one dollar for the purpose of procuring newspapers and pamphlets for the use of one and all of us . And we agree to meet at the store of D.H. Sumner, Esq. in Hartland ----to organize and designate the number and kind of pamphlets and papers to be taken.” A “reading Room” was designated at the Sumner Store , which was open all days except Sunday, where men could enjoy the print of the times as well as the company of the town’s gentlemen. No ladies allowed. The first “Men’s Club” in town?

There was little in the way of children’s books in those days. In Nancy Darling’s History of the Universalist Church in Hartland, there is first mention of a collection of books for children. The Rev. Joseph Peirce was the minister and he encouraged the growth of a library for the children. The Ladies Circle donated money and the library numbered one hundred books, or more. There were also children’s libraries in the Congregational and the Methodist churches.

In 1850 the library movement in Hartland took a giant step with the organization of the Connecticut River Division Library. It is unclear what “division” refers to. The membership grew to 41 men, most from Hartland Four Corners. You could be expelled from membership if you lost a book or didn’t pay your fines. This collection grew to about 90 books. The reading material was more informative and educational than entertaining. There were very few children’s books. This group didn’t last long but was quickly followed by the formation of the Hartland Library Association with dues of \$3 to become a member. There was an annual charge of .50 with which, with the fines, new books were purchased. You could also join by a donation of books.

This collection was subsequently given to the newly – formed Hartland Public Library and is one of the “libraries” referred to in the Town Report of 1897. The Hartland reading Club remained active and held meetings where the members read Shakespeare aloud, each taking a part.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the public library growth was given a tremendous impetus by Andrew Carnegie and during the early 1900’s the whole country was becoming public library conscious.

With all this early interest, it is understandable that the idea of a town library must have been in the air. In the Town Report of 1896, the Superintendent of Schools, Katherine Ainsworth asks “Are we to have a town library started by the schools? If every part of the town can work for it and feel it is for the common good, let us by all means commence at once”. Further, Article 8 at Town Meeting that year asked for a vote on appropriating a sum to support a free library. After a motion was defeated to pass over the article the article did pass and \$25 was appropriated to maintain a free public library. In

addition, the state contributed \$100 worth of books, schools raised money, and interested persons made contributions. There were three divisions to the town, Hartland, Hartland Four Corners and North Hartland. The total of 900 books was evenly divided among the three localities. The libraries were in private homes. If you were the librarian, you housed the books and were paid nothing. The first librarians were Louise Sturtevant, Mrs. O.M. Badter and Mrs. D. Flowers. (I guess they decided that women could read after all) The share of books for the Village of Hartland was placed in the home of Miss Sturtevant's father. See picture.

The first library trustees elected represented a fairly good geographic distribution. It is interesting to note that no woman was elected until 1899. This was Miss Dora Penniman, a teacher and long time friend and worker in the library. The Village Library appeared to be the headquarters of the Hartland Public Library as accession books were kept there as well as the over-all catalogue. In 1898 a catalog of all the books, containing 565 titles was printed and we presume made available to the readers. The choice of reading material was not without its critics. Some wanted more serious material and as some of the books were donated, it wasn't always easy to please everyone. In the March 1908 Town Meeting, it was voted that at least half of the \$25 appropriated by the town be used for other than current works of fiction.

The Library continued to grow, albeit without much in the way of juvenile literature. There just was not much available, certainly nothing like the wonderful books of today. For several years, beginning in 1899, all the newly acquired books were listed in the Library Reports section of the Town Report, perhaps to generate more interest. In 1902, the trustees asked for more shelving as books were stacked on the floor. They also suggested combining Hartland Four and Three Corners but no action was taken.

Louise Sturtevant died in 1903 and the 1200 books at her home had to be moved. Three librarians served brief terms and we don't know if the books were moved at each change but they usually followed a librarian to her home. In 1909 Mrs. Robert Lansing took over and kept the office for 25 years. It appears that she did not house the collection as it was re-cataloged and moved into "the new and attractive village room where the Nature Club and Y.M.C.A. also meet". The "new" room was in the wing of the Hartland Hotel. They remained there until Damon Hall was completed and the Village had a room of its own. (This is the present treasurer's office) While the Hotel was being razed the books were housed at Mrs. Lansing's home and at the Congregational Church. Mrs. Lansing was Dora Penniman's sister and together they sorted, weeded and settled the collection in the new library room. They were the first to use the Dewey Decimal system.

Mrs. W.W. Hatch and Miss Lucy Perkins served as librarians, the collection continued to grow and space was again a problem. A valuable gift of books was received from Daniel Willard, one of Hartland's most prominent sons and another in memory of the daughter of the Dallas Pollards.

Librarians retired and new ones took their places. Due to the increased circulation and cost of books, the town's appropriation grew to \$225, with \$75 going to each branch.

Over the years, the Vermont Library Commission gave considerable assistance to the book needs of small libraries. By 1899, the State Federation of Women's Clubs was taking an active interest in helping

to establish traveling libraries and in 1900; the State Legislature passed an Act providing for traveling libraries. The Hartland Library was one of the first to make use of this service. In 1922 The Women's Club gave the first bookmobile to the Library Commission. Hartland was visited regularly.

In 1958 a new library building was built and given to the town by Ernest Martin. Eventually the libraries in Hartland Four Corners, and North Hartland were closed. This building served the library needs for many years until; it too became too small and was followed by the wonderful building in the meadow that we all love so much. The Martin Library building is now the home of the Hartland Historical Society. I think Mr. Martin would approve. I hope so.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH STAINED GLASS WINDOWS

This season's window is in the Southwest corner of the sanctuary

CLARK CUSHMAN AND WIFE ABIGAIL TUCKER CUSHMAN, CAPTAIN OLIVER TUCKER CUSHMAN, MARY C. CUSHMAN.

Of greatest interest is Captain Oliver Tucker Cushman, the son of Clark and Abigail. Oliver was born in Hartland on May 6, 1841 and died June 3, 1864. He was a Captain in the 1st Vermont Calvary, 1st Regiment Co. E in the Civil War. Listed in the Dartmouth Review as a Dartmouth graduate who died in the Civil War, Oliver participated in Farnsworth's charge at Gettysburg. He is shown in the bas relief of the key members of the 1st Vt. Calvary at the William Wells Monument dedicated at Gettysburg on July 13, 1913. Oliver is to the right of Sergeant McBride. Having been severely wounded in the face he has fallen backward on his horse. He died a year later at the Battle of Cold Harbor near Richmond. His rank when he entered was that of 4th Sergeant. He was Captain when he died.

Oliver's grandfather was living in Hartland in 1800 and an item in Spooner's Vermont Journal, May 14, 1810 says "On Thursday evening last, a new dwelling house and corn barn together with their contents, the property of Mr. Holmes Cushman of Hartland was consumed by fire. His grandmother, Mary Molly Paddock was born in Middleboro, Mass. in 1757 and died in Hartland in 1814. The 1800 census shows them to be wealthy farm owners who lived on the land we know of as the Hoisington Farm

HAPPY HALLOWEEN IN HARTLAND OR THE SOLDIER HAS A NEW HAT

I have not lived in Hartland long enough to appreciate the Halloweens of days gone by. I have heard stories, but will go to the Nov. 16, 1952 issue of the Hartland News to get the straight scoop.

"HARTLAND HALLOWEEN. The kids in North Hartland and Four Corners had fun but did nothing to be ashamed of. Those in Hartland Village, however, no doubt helped by some from other sections,

disgraced not only themselves but their parents, too. Neither were they all kids, since youngsters other than kids had to be driving the cars involved.

The morning after saw the Soldier's Green completely filled with old buggies, sleighs, baled hay, wagons, rakes, rubbish of all description. An old toilet bowl covered the soldier's head. The scene brought many smiles and laughs but the general opinion was. "This is going too far." Such a night's work requires but little imagination, skill or daring. It's just a nuisance – committed largely by a small group of young men who just can't bear to grow up. The Selectmen chose to leave the scene untouched for almost a week.

Mrs. Stevenson informs the News, by the way, that in the old days it was "trick AND treat", rather than "trick OR treat". The kids performed some stunt for which they received a reward – treat. She feels everyone had a lot more fun and less damage was done."

Then come the Selectmen. "Bradley said the Halloween junk lugged into the square by the kids and "kids" had been left in public view several days on purpose so that the people could get a good look at it and, perhaps become indignant enough to urge preventive measures another year. The Selectmen offered no solution. Ogden proposed another year that a constable be hired to stand by; take names of miscreants, and fine either the parents of the kids or the "kids" themselves."

Carol Mowry, editor

A NOTE FROM CAROL

The generosity of so many of you in giving extra donations is greatly appreciated. This is the list since our last letter. Charles Cushman, George Smith, Bev Lasure, Robert Dukeshire, Gordon Richardson, Joe Silver, Paula Staples, Peter Welsh, Betsy Haartz, Abraham Oort, Roger Shepard, Deborah Luquer, Edith Hoose, Warren Cone, Marjorie Shepard, James Bower, Richard Taylor, Iloene Brennan, Jane Johnston, Webster family visitors, Ilodolyn Ahearn, Cheryl and Pamela Perry, Carmen Summarsell. Many times I only named ½ of a married couple. Thanks go to both of you as I save space.

Other gifts include: The Life Story of James Harvey Craig from Eleanor Shepard, 2001-2002 telephone and community information book from Rosemary Morancy, Post cards from Deborah Luquer, Poem: "Where Vermont Comes In" by Charles Darling from Carole Darling Kashner. Dispersal sale of Fareham Farm, Vt Jerseys sale and Jersey Show at Billings farm from Barbara Rhoad.

SEND YOUR FAMILY RECIEPTS

I am starting a collection of Hartland family receipts. Maybe, someday, down the line, we will publish a cookbook. We have some old receipts here but no where nearly enough. If we don't get enough to publish, the collection would still be a wonderful asset to our library. Please send to P.O. 297 or drop by with, receipts used by earlier generations of Hartland cooks. These could include preserving instructions as well as the favorite cake. If you have a picture of the cook, and a little about her, so much the better. I will share some of them in future newsletters. Thank you.

OFF TO PORTSMOUTH!!!

We are planning a bus trip to Portsmouth in June 2011 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our Charter. The plans are not firmed up yet, including the date, but our first step is to collect early responses from the Historical Society members. This is how it looks at this point. We will take a Premier Bus from Hartland at 8 A.M. on a weekday during the last 2 weeks of June. The first stop will be the Wentworth-Coolidge House where the important paper work for granting the Charters took place. We will have bag lunches there that you bring with you. The grounds are extensive and right on the water. Then we will go to the Warner House where Benning Wentworth lived before he moved to the Wentworth- Coolidge mansion. This will be followed by free time on Seres St. with the option of going through the Moffatt-Ladd House and Gardens. You would pay your own way there. Those who chose not to go through this house may enjoy a drink, ice cream or shopping on this quant and very old street. We will then take a 1 ½ hour boat trip through-out Portsmouth Harbor. The guide will point out the historical parts of the harbor as well as it's more modern uses, such as the Naval Shipyard. This is an easy ride as they stay in the harbor. When we have completed the boat ride we will go to Newicks for dinner. Again, you will need to pay your own way. Then home to Hartland, about a two hour trip. It looks like the price will be about \$70. (Buses have gotten very expensive). Please let me know if you are interested before Jan 1. I will be asking for deposits after that date, when we are sure that there is enough interest to make it a go. After that date, I will open it up to the greater Upper Valley to be sure of a full bus. Don't be left behind!!! It is interesting to see the city that existed when we were still undeveloped wilderness. Call at 436-3383, write to P.O. Box 297, or e-mail to cwmowry@comcast.net
Carol

