

HARTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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THE OLD HOTEL OF HARTLAND

The first building that we know of, to sit where Damon Hall now resides was a hotel. The old hotel in Hartland went by the names Hotel Hartland and Pavillion Hotel during its life from the mid 1770s to 1914.



The Hotel at Hartland Three Corners

The following "Account of Hotel Hartland, Hartland, Vermont from the Vermont Journal, Windsor, Vt. February 27, 1914

The dismantling of Hotel Hartland has begun, doors and partitions in the upper story being removed."

"March 6, 1914 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY SUPPER

All who attended the Washington's Birthday supper at the hotel on Monday evening, February 23, report the occasion as one of special interest and pleasure. It was given by the ladies of the Congregational Church and a success from both the financial and social standpoints.

In observance of Washington's Birthday anniversary, the rooms were decorated with pictures of our first president, of his wife and of scenes from their lives. Also some of his well known maxims were printed and put on the walls. The entertainment was much enjoyed, consisting of the "Art Gallery" which afforded much merriment during the evening and kept people continually guessing. Also Dora Penniman and Mrs. Underwood read short articles referring to Washington's life and personalities and a letter which he wrote to his wife after he had received his commission in charge of the army.

The supper tables furnished an ample supply of food and each of the three tables was decorated with a miniature tent, representing Washington's snow bound quarters at Valley Forge. Little cardboard hatchets were at each place. The ladies who served the supper were attractively dressed in colonial costume and added much to the pleasure of the occasion. So in many ways the past was linked to the present.

Mrs. Mary Freeman Hill sent a brief word regarding her earliest remembrance, when at the age of eight years she came to the hotel to call with her mother on Mrs. Lewis Merritt, 68 years ago.

W.R. Sturtevant kindly consented to prepare and read a sketch of the history of the hotel. It was very interesting and called to mind many reminiscences among the people present. As this gathering would be the last one of the kind to be held in the old hotel, it was thought fitting to have a sketch read concerning its past history.

"It is not known just what year the hotel was built, but the land on which it stands was deeded to Isaac Stevens by William S. Ashley in 1774.

The hotel was built by Isaac Stevens who was the grandfather of the present families of that name who now reside in Hartland. He then owned a large tract of land comprising a large part of that which lies northeast of Hartland village. The hotel, as originally built was a square building with a high roof, a line of sheds on the north side, with two barns on the south side of the road.

At that time there was no road on the south side but the road ran by the east end of the hotel and veered westerly by the site of the old pound and came on to the present road about opposite the Barbour house (on Rte 12). Marks of the old road can still be seen on the side hill beyond the sand bank. The new road south of the hotel was laid out and built about 1835. My father was detailed to work on the new road and with his hoe tore up a piece of turf and said, "I can say now that I've struck the first blow on the new road". Even as late as this, the land through which the road now runs was wooded and trees had to be cut and the stumps, several of them, remained in the road for a long time after the road was opened for travel.

My grandfather (Dr. Friend Sturtevant) with his wife and three children came here from Pittsfield, Mass. in 1804 and stopped at the hotel one night on their way to Woodstock. My

grandmother told me that at that time the land west of the hotel was covered with a great growth of pine and other timber, covering all the country looking west.

The hall in the original building was on the south side of the upper story, looking up the entire length of the building with the sleeping rooms on the north.

After the wing was built, which must have been soon after 1830, the old hall was converted into sleeping rooms by means of swinging partitions hung on hinges, so that upon occasion these could be swung back and the old hall shown in its natural or original situation. These remained so until the hotel was repaired by R.L. (Robert Leroy) Britton about 1874.

I can remember when suppers were served there after the new wing was built.

One of the barns was sold to Ephraim Cleveland and moved to the Mann place on the Windsor Road and the other which was the main barn was moved to its present site about 1866. This barn stood about 40 feet westerly from the well north of the Richardson Store and had a wide shed on its northerly side, running the whole length. The other barn cornered on to this shed on its north westerly corner and was not quite as long as the main barn. It was no trick to make money in a hotel in those days.

All merchandise was brought from Boston, save what came up the river on flat boats, by six or eight horse teams and the barns would be filled with horses every night.

Then all hotels sold rum and the bar which stood on the south westerly corner of the present office is well remembered by the writer.

Assemblies, as they were then called, or dancing parties were held in the old hall and gentlemen danced the pigeon wing with as many pairs of silk stockings as could be afforded and with their coats off. At 7 o'clock precisely the waiters would appear in the hall with different kinds of liquid refreshments which were freely partaken of by both sexes alike. My father (Cullen P. Sturtevant) told me no one got drunk and the parties were always orderly. (invitations of these assemblies as early as 1820 were shown)

The wing, as it has always been called was built soon after 1830 and has a spring floor, which was designed by the late Stephen D. Marcy and as a dancing floor probably has no equal in Vermont. It was not so large into one room on the easterly end as it is now and originally had an alcove on the east end for the music. This continued in use up to the advent of the double bass which was so tall that it couldn't be accommodated in the alcove and a stage was erected in the west end which has been in use ever since. Soon after this the alcove and one room on the east end was taken out leaving the hall at its present size. This occurred about 1860.

The lower story of the wing was designed for a store and was occupied within the memory of the writer by Mr. Lawton, who had two boys, Wade and Wallace Lawton who served as clerks. The room where the post office now is was a large room originally and extended clear across the width of the wing and was used as a courtroom, caucus room, and for holding suppers, etc. I remember a court which was held there between James N. and John S. Willard, brothers, who had a pugilistic encounter and aired their troubles in court.

About the year 1860 was held one of the Universalist festivals here. At this time the hotel was not occupied as a hotel and was patronized by probably the largest crowd ever present on such an occasion. Over \$300 was taken and people were present from all the adjoining towns. Bart and Marcia as they were called, properly Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bartlett Luce (this may have been Lull) had charge of the kitchen and the supper with those two at the helm - those who remember them will agree - that they were a hustling department.

Freeman Alexander as he was familiarly called opened the hotel in 1856 and under his management and his good wife's, it was a popular hostelry for many years. When Lewis Merritt opened the hotel in 1837, he held a sort of reception (I presume it was for men only) who came to take their usual liquid refreshment. Among them was the late Isaac N. Cushman, a noted lawyer who built the brick house back of the M.E. Church. When he entered the hotel he caught sight of the sign, (Pavilion

House) which it is presumed was then first displayed, and translated it thus: Pavilion, a tent, a moving caravan.

During Mr. Alexander's reign he held a series of oyster suppers, without dancing, which were quite popular. I remember one of them when George P. Hayes and Dr. Stiles, both of them of Windsor, were present, one at each end of the table, and after dinner speeches were in order and from two such ready wits, lots of fun was forthcoming. Dr. Stiles said it looked pretty Hazy at the other end of the table and Hayes retorted that he would have got there sooner if there were not so many Stiles to climb on the way.

Before the hotel was opened by Mr. Britton, the piazza reached from the northeast corner around the whole front of the hotel, including the wing. "

"June 5, 1914 The Post office is now in its new quarters, a very pleasant roomy office.

June 12, 1914 The Post Office is in its new quarters, which are dry and pleasant, the remainder of the Hotel Hartland being razed to the ground Monday morning. "

(I'm not sure where the Post Office went after leaving the hotel as there are several locations in the Three Corners area that have housed it. C.Y.M.)

Another memory from a different Mr. Sturtevant " Mr. F.C. Sturtevant, in his anniversary address on "Quaint Characters of Hartland" said of the old hotel, "I remember when the stage, with from four to six horses, would come thundering into town with a toot of the horn and a crack of the whiplash and pull up to Merritt's Pavillion (Lewis Merritt's), change horses, all passengers go into the bar room and get a good drink of Santa Cruz rum and then continue the journey" (unknown)

An interesting tidbit from Lillian Marcotte – The Pavillion Hotel was run at one time by her fathers mother, Grandmother Hatch, after her husband died from tuberculosis contracted when he served in the Civil War.

CAMP ADIRONDAC

The 150 year anniversary of the Civil War has been somewhat over shadowed by our celebration of the 250th year of our Charter. This treasure is dated May 17, 1863, but no matter. It is a letter from that period.

"Near Washington, D.C. Friend David, I will spend a few moments this beautiful Sabbath in answering your welcome letter which was received in due season. When I last wrote you we were at Great Falls, but the next morning we received orders to march to Washington. The rest of the Regiment came as far as Great Falls that day and the next morning we started for Washington, where we arrived about dark and here we remained ever since. We have been expecting for some time to get marching orders as we thought we should have to go down and help Gen. Hooker (?), but have not yet been called

upon. Week before last 7 Companies of our Regiment were down to Fort Delaware to escort some prisoners that were taken at the Battle of Fredricksburg. There were about 1250(?) of them and a tough looking set of fellows I assure you most of them were old veterans and had been in the Army ever since the commencement of the war. They had no uniforms but were dressed in anything they could get with all sorts of old hats, capes. We left Washington about sunset, and arrived in Baltimore a little before midnight. When we left the cars and marched into the city to the Philadelphia depot, where we loaded up again and got ready to start about 4 o'clock A.M. We arrived at Philadelphia about noon where we took the boats for the fort, which is about 50 miles down the river from Philadelphia on a small island. We reached the Fort about 5 o'clock P.M... We arrived at Washington about 3 o'clock the same night having traveled 400 miles in a little less than 48 hours. I was glad to learn you was getting along so well with your lumbering this spring. You enquired how many had died out of my Co. We have lost four. Eugene O. Marshall from Washington, N.H. Elias F. Powers from Croyden, N.H., Philander W. Peck from Newport, Newton Clough from Grantham and we have also had 3 discharged, viz John Short, Plainfield, Oliver P. Gillingham, form Washington, I believe, and David L. Robbins from Newport. Co E is getting along well I guess. Cap't Rhodes has gone home and the Co. is under the command of Lieutenant Cobleigh. David, how much older do you feel since you have got to be an uncle? I am in the same situation myself. I think you have done pretty well to get rid of Holt Spaulding and Hastings. It seemed that Holt's promises that he made last summer did not amount to much but I am glad that the authorities of Hartland followed him up. I wish that some of the Whiskey dealers out here were obliged to leave or suffer some punishments. There is any quantity of it around here. But I must close at this time with regards to all, hoping your well write again soon to your friend J. Miller "

*I have made a great search of our records in an effort to locate J. Miller
There are no listings of one of the appropriate age in our cemeteries. There
is no listing in our records of Hartlanders who served in the Civil War. The only
possibility would be Dr. J. S. Miller who married Harriet Walker in 1833. They
removed from Hartland to Flushing, Mich. in 1836. Harriet was born in 1812 and
died in 1852 having had six children. The letter does not indicate medical
training and he would have been getting along in years, although I don't have a
birth date. Perhaps he came back and joined a local regiment other than
Hartland... Lots of unanswered questions. C.Y. M.*

NOTES, NEWS AND THANK YOU'S

There is a lot going on at the Historical Society! In October we will be acquiring J. Howard Flower's Chandler and Price printing press, complete with type, pictures and more. We are privileged to be the recipient of this fine gift. It will take some cleaning, assembly and at least new rollers. If this is an interest of yours please call Carol at 436-3383. We are in the final stages of designing a plaque to place on the exterior of the Martin Memorial Building. We are very fortunate to have this as our home and wanted to share its history with all who pass by. The collection of early Hartland recipes is growing.

There is still time, but not much, to get yours to us. I will be scheduling a committee meeting soon to make decisions regarding layout, color, what should be included and more. The typing will all be done here so as to have it all on one C.D. We are going to attempt to do this ourselves with the exception of the laminating and binding. If you would like to be on the committee, please call – again- 436-3383. It should be fun and not require a great deal of time. There are plans afoot to take another trip in late spring. We are thinking of going to Hildene while the peonies are in bloom, followed by Bennington Monument and the Bennington Museum, home of Grandma Moses' paintings and much more. If this sounds like something you would enjoy, please let someone at H.H.S. know and we will have more about it when plans are firmer. Other programs for during the year are being worked on that are sure to please. Sandy Palmer has an ambitious goal of photographing every house in town as part of the 250th. This will be a wonderful record and great fun to look at in 50 or 100 years from now. It seems that individuals will need to go out and do a road or two. Please call Sandy at 457-2240 if you can help. Thank you!! Along the same lines. If you have flood pictures that you could share with us we would be most grateful. We will put them in a photo album with photos of other natural disasters to hit our region. On a quite different note. The Society has voted to purchase a 500 + page book about Vermonters in the War of 1812. It will be here for you to peruse.

Now to the Thank Yous. What would we do without all your help – both with material things and cash donations? Many recipes from Phyllis Bowers, Alice Jersey, Susan and Les Motschman , Edith White and Lillian Marcotte, An Official Bicentennial Guide, found in door, a July 4 diary page by Sarah Drumm, from Bill Drumm," Jackson's Vegetables "sign from Scott Gray, School pictures from Priscilla Atwood Knox, granite bench, plaque and oil painting from the Atwood family, No. Hartland bridge scrapbook from Lorene Follensbee. Monetary donations from : Sandy Hadden, Harriet Dumas, Pamela Perry, Richard Taylor, Jane Cawthorne, Marie Kirn, William Steffens, Sylvia Blodgett, David Eastman, Elizabeth Haartz, Paula Staples, Joe Silver, Roger Shepard, Richard Waddell, Chiho Kaneko, Carol Rumrill, Robert Dukeshire, Marion Kenyon, Jane Johnston, George Smith, Beverly Lasure, and George Little. I expect I should say "and family" for most of these.

I have included dues reminders for those of you that we have not heard from. We hope that you will choose to remain members so as to continue with your support and in turn we will continue sending the newsletter...

“Little Known Former Resident Leaves Town \$50,000 in Will Windfall is Announced by Selectmen After Ruling By Probate Court

The Selectmen were a pretty cheerful lot last night when they announced, at a special officers' meeting, that Hartland is to benefit to the tune of \$50,000 from the will of the late William H. O'Inell. Although the Selectmen have known of the prospect for several months, they have wisely said nothing about it until the case got through the Connecticut Probate Court: descendants of the deceased had contested the Hartland item in the will. Their case was based partly on the premise that the man must have been mentally deranged, since no person in his right mind would leave any money to Hartland; i.e. Hartland had had its town debt paid off once before and went right into debt again. Medical authority, however, was called in by Hartland's defense lawyer to prove that the man had been absolutely sane at the time the will was drawn and was only 93 years old at the time; that it might have been a different matter had he been an old man.

How to spend the money??? There was considerable discussion at the meeting as to how the money might best be spent. Many were in favor of liquidating the town debt first of all, then to use the balance to set up a separate fund to prosecute to the full extent of the law all delinquent tax payers and so keep Hartland out of debt for good and all. One prominent citizen, who preferred not to be quoted, opposed this idea. He said "Now don't get me wrong. I think it might be a good idea, but, then, again, it mightn't. Personally I think it would be wise to put the entire \$50,000 into a big sinking fund to carry us through emergencies. We could sell some more schoolhouses to pay off the debt."

Ogden opposed the debt liquidation business, stating that "a big debt is a healthy sign. Any town without a big debt is just coasting. Have you ever heard of a prosperous business expanding without borrowing money in a big way?"

Representatives of the Citizens Committee for Better Schools surprised those present with the statement that they had been arguing for a central school before ONLY for reasons of economy, that they really believed that the one-room school was the only answer and then proposed that the money be used for the construction and endowment of one-room schools throughout the town. The School Board, feeling, as usual, that their deliberations were nobody else's business, kept mum, but cast knowing glances at each other.

Some of the old timers in town might remember the O'Inell family homestead up on Rabbitt Hill. William, the youngest son, inherited his father's drive and imagination. Realizing early in life that farming was not for him, especially on Rabbitt Hill, he soon moved to Hartford, Conn. Although successful in many different enterprises, he finally made the bulk of his fortune selling second-hand barber chairs to South African chieftains to be used as thrones. He always spoke reverently of the elevating nature of this business" The Hartland News April 1, 1953 (I guess the date says it all, but it is fun. C.Y.M.)