

# HARTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 297 14 ROUTE 12

HARTLAND, VERMONT 05048

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SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

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## A CHURCH IN NORTH HARTLAND

The church in North Hartland has gone by many names. I know of three – there may be more.

“When the church building was first erected in 1790 it was known as the Union Church. At that time it was on the east side of present day Rte 5. At different times it was used by different denominations, including the Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists. In 1830 the church building was moved across the road to its present location. At length, all use of the church building was discontinued as all former members of the church either died or moved away. The building sat unused for about a dozen years when a Roman- Catholic public school teacher became instrumental in its rebirth. Mrs. Helen Currier was attempting to read Christmas and Easter stories to the children in the elementary grades when she was shocked to discover that they were totally ignorant of what she was talking about. The stories simply meant nothing to them.

Mrs. Currier brought up the matter of the children’s religious education at a meeting of the Community Club. The members agreed that something needed to be done.

“So it came about that in February 1944, the club voted a sum of money to purchase church-school supplies and went on record as favoring the organizing of a Sunday school. A committee was appointed to get the work started. The Rev. Cranston Clayton, then pastor of the Methodist Church of White River Jct. was called in for counsel, and the new project was launched.

At the same time the minister began holding informal services of worship one evening each week at the homes of various families in the village. Later the services were held in a room attached to the general store, a room that was also used as a village library. This program was later carried on by Mr. Clayton’s successor, the Rev. Vinton E. Ziegler. This, then, was the situation I (Howard L. Stimmel) inherited as the new pastor of the Methodist Church in White River Jct. in the fall of 1945.”

*Now I would like to approach the church's history from a different source. What was happening before the closing and the 12 year "dry spell"? The following is from Alice Russ Shepard to Virginia Bail who wrote "200 Years in the Hartland Churches" printed in the January, 1962, Vermont History magazine.*

"Dear Mrs. Bail, I am sorry that there is not a more complete history of the church. My "Dad's" family (Russ) were first settlers in Hartford but were near N. Hartland so went there for church and other things. The church means a lot to me as I have heard so much about it and Dad took care of it always. I have heard him tell of going there as a child. Would go for the day a morning service then lunch and Sunday school and Bible lessons in the P.M. I asked my son to please have his children baptized there as they are the sixth generation to worship in the church.

The Ottaquechee Woolen Co. always gave 10 dollars a week to the church. Daniel Willard always gave. Everyone gave time and money to keep the church. Alice Russ Shepard"

*Also by Alice* "No. Hartland Church - The church was built in 1790. Before the rail road came thru it was moved. It was built about where Geo. Smiths house is now and faced the west. They moved it with oxen and wooden rolls and turned it to face east. It was built as an Episcopal Church (From Mrs. Bail we learn that it became the Union Church in 1809 when the Episcopal Mission was discontinued).

The land where it now stands was given by the Hunter family a straight deed to three trustees. Was to be a Union Church and used by all only never to be used by Catholics ( and look who got it going again!) Was remodeled and painted on the outside in 1887. The belfry built and the bell given by Henry Dunbar in 1890.

The inside was painted and carpet laid in 1891. Papers under the carpet were dates in that year. Sometime later the choir loft was closed and a new one made at the ministers right. At his left going east and west were three pews for ministers' family and elders. A Windsor Gazateer in 1880 said it was occupied by the Methodist Society with Rev. H.G. Hough pastor and valued at fifteen hundred dollars (it also said that it had twelve members. C.Y.M.) Was served by ministers from Hartland and W.R.J. and Hartford. The church books and records were destroyed by fire. "

*Now let's move forward as the church, once again becomes an active part of the community.*

"Getting the church building to use was rather complicated. It had been abandoned by its former members so could be taken over. However the church had to be used for fifteen years before it could be claimed legally. It was in need of repairs. It had only an entry and one large room. It was heated by stoves and long stove pipes ran the length of the room. A rather beautiful arched ceiling was its main beauty.

It was apparent that much needed to be done but on June 9 1946 it was formally opened as a Methodist church.

The North Hartland Library had by that time become homeless and the Library Association, the North Hartland Community Club and the church decided that together they could repair and maintain the building to the benefit of the whole community.

It was divided into a small sanctuary, a community hall, a small library room and a kitchen. A ceiling was put over all. During the years many repairs and improvements were made, much of the work being done by members and townspeople. A new roof and chimney were put on in 1948.

It went from stoves to a wood and coal furnace. Wood cutting bees were held to supply wood. Finally an oil burning furnace was installed. The old organ was replaced by a modern electric organ. This organ was dedicated in 1955 in memory of Stuart Carpenter. The church was painted in 1952 and repainted in 1962. It was redecorated inside and water put in.

Membership grew to well over 100 at one time. A Sunday school, a MYF and WSCS have been active from almost the first year. Lay preachers were trained and with a few assists by outside speakers have kept the church open when the pastor was away on vacation and for other reasons. All of the organizations have been very generous with gifts of support and furnishings.

In 1969 there was talk of rebuilding or remodeling the church to make more room. The Community Club had withdrawn their support and claims the previous year. The Conference was holding a sum of money that could be allocated to this church. There was money in the treasury of the church and a loan was possible. It was decided to ask for pledges on a three year basis.

In 1970 the arrangements were made. By this time the church was now legally the property of the North Hartland Community Church. It was decided to retain the historic old building which was basically sound and to put a basement under it. It was moved to one side and a basement dug and new foundation put in. Then the church was placed back on the new foundation. The church hall, a kitchen, the library room, toilets, furnace and storage rooms are in the basement. Partitions have been taken out of the original church room and it is on its way to becoming an adequate and hopefully attractive sanctuary." Christian Advocate March 20, 1947

## Joseph H. Dunbar

*No. Hartland has many accomplished sons. Here is another member of the Dunbar family. (Remember Henry who gave the church bell). This obituary appeared in the January 13, 1911 issue of the Vermont Journal under a North Hartland heading.*

"Joseph H. Dunbar of this town died on Sunday December 25. Mr. Dunbar was the son of Norman William and Susan Stocker Dunbar. His ancestors were among the earliest settlers in Hartland.

In the year 1780, his great grandfather, John Dunbar, one of the soldiers who were sent to protect Royalton in the Revolutionary War, came to town and occupied what is now known as the Arthur Kneen place (Andrew Stewart). On this farm Mr. Dunbar was born on the eighth day of March 1858. Four years later the family moved to the farm on the Connecticut River near No. Hartland to that place, which from that time until his death Mr. Dunbar has regarded as home. Young Joseph attended the village schools at No. Hartland for a few years and then attended successively the higher grade schools of Royalton, Norwich and St. Johnsbury. After graduation from the St. Johnsbury Academy he entered Dartmouth College in the class of '79. Here he enjoyed a successful career, being appreciated by both his instructors and his fellows. During the seven years following his graduation he was principal of Haverill Academy. In 1886, he became the principal of Hartford High School in White River Jct., and at the end of three years, had the satisfaction of seeing it's first class graduated. He was then induced to accept the office of supervisor of the schools of Windsor County. He then became principal of the high school at West Lebanon, N.H., then Norwich, Vt. And then Perkins Academy in So. Woodstock. In 1898, he went to Minneapolis, Minnesota to become principal of Archibald Business College.

At the age of only 14, he taught in Plainfield, N.H. and at his college graduation he was received in the Phi Beta Kappa Society. He was the author of Dunbar's Inductive Arithmetic and of a treatise on the Latin verb. During the Presidential campaign of 1888 the Republican Party made use of his ability as a public speaker and secured his services to stump the state for Benjamin Harrison. As he grew more familiar with the reprehensible features of politics of the dominant parties of his day he revolted and embraced political views which then were not widely understood, and were popularly regarded as dangerous. He had the satisfaction however of seeing a very rapid gain of many of these views in public appreciation and has seen very friendly and sympathetic interest in his views entertained by a considerable proportion of the better educated men of the day, and beheld a majority of the states of the Union either adopt, or enter into serious consideration of some of his favorite measures in the interest of popular government. Mr. Dunbar had been honored by the socialist party of Vermont as its candidate for governor, lieutenant governor, member of congress, attorney general, and town representative, and was also a member of its executive committee. He was respected in his community for his courage and singleness of purpose in all his activities. Many young people were assisted by him in acquiring an education and by them his services are remembered with gratitude."

*We have a glass plate photo of his class in Hartland which will be part of a show on July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. This class was on the upper floor of the 3 Corners school, opposite the Brick Church. He was teaching this "Upper school" at the time of his death.*

## President's Notes

What's New??? Lots. I hardly know where to start but first I will mention the cookbook that we will get going on in the fall. Still hope to get more early Hartland recipes. We have

received some from Phyllis Bowers, "Recipes from Ethyl's Barn" and also from Alice Jersey and Susan and Les Motschman. Don't be left out.

## Jeanne Brink

On Sunday, May 15 at the Library we will have our annual meeting with Jeanne Brink as our speaker. She will answer the question of who were the native people of Vermont and how did they live? Jeanne will examine the importance in Abenaki society of elders and children, the environment, and the continuance of life ways and traditions. This is at 2 P.M. and will follow a very brief business meeting where we will vote on the following slate for the 2011-2012 year.

President: Carol Mowry, Vice President: Rosemary Morancy, Secretary: Bob Bibby, Treasurer: Les Morschman, Directors: Beverly Lasure, Anne Adams, Robert Guillette, Jay Boeri, Barbara Spear, Clyde Jenne, Judy Howland, Diane Bibby and one T.B.A.

## Howland Atwood Dedication of Bench and Plaque

Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 1 P.M., at the Historical Society we will have a dedication of a bench, plaque and a portrait of Howland Atwood, refreshments to follow. Howland's family is giving the Society and the town this very generous gift, which we are happy to accept. Please come and enjoy a good time with Howland's family, and show our appreciation for their generosity.

## Portsmouth

Thursday, June 23 we will be going to Portsmouth, N.H. to visit the places where our Town was chartered. The Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion, Warner House or Moffatt-Ladd and a boat cruise of the harbor with time to visit Seres St. We end the day with dinner at Newicks. The cost is \$65 per person which does not include meals. Bring a bag lunch, and we'll have separate checks at Newicks. Don't be disappointed, register early. Form below.

## Celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend is packed with events and the Historical Society is right in the middle, working along with the Recreation Center to make this a super occasion. Starting Friday night, July 1 there will be Larken Dancers performing at the Farmers Market. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> the North Hartland Dam is hosting an open house with tours to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> year along with our 250<sup>th</sup>. Also, Damon Hall will be open with a quilt show, flower arrangements, a beautiful

ball gown once worn by Kitty Bacon's grandmother, and a slide show of over 200 early Hartland pictures, a silent auction for a 1855 Windsor County Hosea Doton map. ( We have 2) and a not to be missed exhibit of the first Proprietors map and pages from the only Federal property tax assessment , conducted in 1798. Damon Hall will be open for visitors on Sat. Sun. and on Monday A.M. Times TBA. ALSO on Saturday, the Universalist Church is putting on the play "Uncle Josh" which they performed many times in the 1900's followed, I'm told, by a ham and bean supper. There may well be more additions to the weekend and maybe some changes, but don't leave town. It's going to be a great event. Monday will be the traditional Old Home Day with the parade at 11! Expect something very special at the firework display on Monday night!

Dues are due!! It happens once a year to keep us going. Thank you all!

Mail to Hartland Historical Society, P.O. Box 297, Hartland, 05048