

HARTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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HARTLAND, VERMONT 05048
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SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2012

Dr. Paul Spooner

It's no secret that Hartland is a remarkable place that has, and is still producing, outstanding citizens that contribute greatly to the well being of the State of Vermont. This letter concerns itself with one of the very first.

Dr. Paul Spooner (1746-1789) was a surgeon and Revolutionary War veteran. He was born in Dartmouth, Mass. but grew up in Petersham, N.H. In 1768, having finished his education in his chosen profession, he moved to Vermont and purchased on the "New Hampshire Grants" acreage on Clay Hill Road. He built the earliest section of the house later known as Fairview Farm which is still standing and has been restored to its earliest elegance.

List of 1789

<i>one pole</i>	<i>L. S.</i>
<i>3 Yoke oxen</i>	<i>6 = 0 = 0</i>
<i>10 Cows 2 three year old steers</i>	<i>18 = 0 = 0</i>
<i>12 two year olds</i>	<i>24 = 0 = 0</i>
<i>6 horses</i>	<i>18 = 0 = 0</i>
<i>2 year old colts</i>	<i>24 = 0 = 0</i>
<i>one Yearling heifer</i>	<i>4 = 0 = 0</i>
<i>114 Acres improved land</i>	<i>0 = 15 = 0</i>
<i>86 Acres unimproved D.</i>	<i>57 = 0 = 0</i>
	<i>4 = 6 = 0</i>
	<i>156 = 1 = 0</i>
<i>293 Yds tow Cloth</i>	
<i>120 lb Wool</i>	

Hartland July
6th 1789

Paul Spooner

We know from the 1789 tax list that Paul was a wealthy man. This list was taken just 2 months before his untimely death at the age of 43. I was very interested in the “tow” cloth that was listed on this and many of the other tax lists. I contacted Jane Nylander, a leading expert on textiles, through her daughter Sarah Rooker, who lives in Hartland. This is what Jane had to say “Tow cloth is made of yard spun from tow – the course outer part of the remains after the linen fibers have been removed (usually by pulling the flax through a long toothed iron comb called a hatchel or hackle.) It is usually beige in color and very scratchy because it has bits of the outer chaff still attached to the threads. It was woven in very simple weave structures (tabby) with course texture (so simple a child can do it). It was used for course work clothing and children’s clothing – especially trousers – also for grain sacks, bales, and other storage. Because it is made of linen, it gets lighter in color and softer in texture with use and laundering. Sometimes tow cloth was traded for store credits and then shipped south for use in slave clothing.”

Dr. Spooner was married to Asenath Wright and by her had three children. Their son, Paul, moved to Hardwick and became the first town clerk there. Dr. Spooner was, for many years, town clerk and sadly had to record his own wife’s death in 1777. He married second, Mrs. Ann Cogswell Post.

Dr. Spooner first appears in Vermont history as a delegate from Hartland to the convention at Westminster in October 1774 (we were Hertford at this time) to condemn the tea act, Boston port bill and like measures – and was one of the committee on resolutions at the convention. He held other important offices including being a member of the Vermont Council of Safety which constituted the revolutionary government until the adoption of the Constitution in 1777.

Dr. Spooner was first elected a judge of the Superior Court in October 1779. He served as Superior Judge from 1779 until 1782. In 1781 and 1782 Spooner was a Judge of the Probate Court for the District of Windsor. In 1782 he was elected Lieutenant-Governor and held that position until 1787.

In 1780 and 1782 he was appointed agent from Vermont to Congress. On October 17, 1782 in joint assembly of the Legislature, the following transpired.

“Upon motion of Genl. Enos (from North Hartland. His daughter married Ira Allen. Ed.) Resolved, that it is expedient to choose persons to attend congress to transact the business of this state, if necessary. Whereupon made choice of Moses Robinson, Paul Spooner, Ira Allen, Jonas Fay, esquires.

A legislative committee brought in the following private instruction to the said agents elected to negotiate the admission of the state of Vermont into the confederation of the United States.

His Excellency
Thomas Chittenden Esquire;
Captain General, Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the State
of Vermont. To the Hon Jonas Fay, Moses Robinson, and
Paul Spooner, Esquires, and to Isaac Tichenor Esquire, ---

Greeting

Agreeable to Resolutions of the Governor Council and
Generals Assembly of this State, passed at their session at Bennington
in February last electing you and your Agents and Delegates in
behalf of this State to attend the Congress of the United States with

plenary powers to agree upon and ratify Terms of Confederation and perpetual Union with them, and to represent this State in Congress as Delegates for the Year ensuing until recalled by act of Legislature. ;

I do, in the name and by the authority of the freemen of the State of **Vermont**, fully authorize and amply empower you the said **Jonas Fay, Moses Robinson, Paul Spooner and Isaac Tichenor**, esquires or either three of you, to negotiate and complete, on the part of this State, the admission thereof into a federal union with the **United States of North America**.. And in behalf of this State, to subscribe to Articles of perpetual Union and Confederation therewith **Given** under my hand and the Seal of this State In Council this Thirteenth day of March Anno Domini One Thousand seven hundred and eighty two, and in the 6th year of the **Independence** of this State. **Tho. Chittenden**

Spooner was elected to the Vermont Supreme Court and served until his death on Sept 5, 1789. The following appeared in Spooner's Vermont Journal on Sept 16.

" Friday last, departed this life and on Sunday was decently interred, the Honorable Paul Spooner, Esq, in the 44th year of his age. His character as a skilful and careful practioner in the medicinal Art, was established here soon after his arrival from Petersham: even without the advantages of a liberal education. The sprightliness of his genius, his candid and generous temper, his discreet and diligent application to business, soon attracted the eyes of his fellow citizens. He was a steady friend and steady assistant to his country, through all the late unhappy war with Greatbritain (sic); and from the first rise to the present advancement of the State of Vermont---- He died while the other Judges were on the circuit for the administration of justice....The honor and benefit accruing to the town by his dwelling among them has been largely experienced; the loss whereof may be long felt and regretted. He was a zealous promoter of learning- a great benefactor to the rising generation ... As a judge he ever aimed to administer judgment in uprightness....

He left a sorrowful widow (his second wife) and three children (by his first wife) to bemoan their loss, The concourse to the funeral (with only two days for the tidings to spread) was so great, that one could scarce see so many sad countenances, without crying out in the heart, Behold how they loved him. The conjectures of people varied as to the number, as from five to ten hundred. A pertinent and affecting sermon (as it is said) was delivered by the Reverend Aaron Hutchinson of Pomfret, well adapted to the occasion, from Psalm CXLVI 3 4. "Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of man, he returneth to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." After sermons the Funeral Thought was sung, which added not a little to the solemnity."

Information from our achieves and " In Sight of Ye Great River"

"The Living Room" by Lucia Hazen Webster. A letter to her husband Dan, after his death, as she remembers their life together.

"September 9, 1943, Dear Dan, Tonight I am sitting in our living room and, because it is a cold rainy evening, I have a good fire in the fireplace. It makes the room nice and cozy but I do sometimes wonder how well it would heat the room in winter.

I can see the lower of the two irons that held the crane years ago and I wish that crane had not been lost. We have the kettle that hung there and several pot hooks, you know. It must be that Great-Grandmother Elizabeth cooked many meals for Great- Grandfather Moses there when they lived in these two rooms (these are the Websters from Webster Rd.) – this and the one I use now for a kitchen.

When father Webster went west, staying two years or so, trying to decide whether or not he wished to settle there, and Mother was left here with you children, she lived in these rooms I have now. At least once in that time she cooked at this fireplace. John was very sick and was not allowed many of the foods he loved. He cried so when he smelled the food cooking that mother cooked over the fireplace where the odor would go directly up the flue.

Then there were two or three days once when you and I had the fun of boiling water, toasting bread, cooking vegetables and frying meat here in the old iron dishes. A high wind had taken off several bricks at the top of the kitchen chimney so the stove was unusable. But who cared! I had a fireplace and the men found food on their plates at meal time.

How many things have happened in this room. It was our room after you brought me home from our wedding trip. I think we used it consecutively longer than we did any other room in the house and the little stove in here with the fireplace tightly closed made it very comfortable even in winter.

Here John Randolph was born that April (1907) morning sooner than we had looked for him. You hurried to John's to get Cora to come and to have the doctor called, and when you came home your first child, a boy, was here before you.

You had never cared for babies and told me beforehand that I must not be disturbed if you paid little attention to our child but you never failed to do anything you could to care for him. Sometimes I wonder if it were partly to relieve me but as the boy grew older you were proud of him and cared more and more as the years went by.

In another year and a half came Sally, little homely mite who cried half every night and how willingly you took your share of quieting her. We were both very glad to name her for Aunt Sarah and after she was washed that September afternoon I asked you to bring Aunt Sarah in here. She sat down on the seat close by the bed and her first question was "what are you going to call her?" I motioned to you and you put the baby in her arms and we said "Sarah Parsons." Aunt Sarah, dear soul cried and I think you did too. I know I did. We both loved and honored her as much as anyone we knew.

Sally was only a wee thing when a lamp left lighted in here set the room afire – we never knew just how. It was a bitter struggle to save the house and as long as I live I shall remember the terror in your voice when you called to me (I had just carried in a pail of water to throw on the flames) and I did not answer because of the dense smoke which made it impossible for you to see me. I knew then how much you cared.

In this room housed Cousin Lizzie, her books, her eczema and her cat for a year and ten months. Just now I would rather draw a curtain over that period. It was not a happy part of our lives.

When Cousin Lizzie left and Lucia and Hi came in here to live they made this into a very pleasant sitting room. Danny (Dan Comstock) was very sick in here and I used to come and look at him but try not to let him see me for fear he would tease me to take him up when he needed above everything else to be kept quiet.

You and I were again sleeping in here when the big earthquake wakened us and we lay speculating as to whether it might be German bombs, a great explosion, perhaps in Springfield Arsenal, or just an earthquake.

Many times at Christmas we have set the table here for a feast and fourteen of us have sat down for a jolly meal. A year ago last Thanksgiving the rest of the family was quarantined for mumps so you and Carl Smith and I had Thanksgiving dinner in here alone.

Then last March John Randolph and I brought you in here to spend your last month on earth. It is here you left us, here the minister breathed a prayer for us who were left, and thru this south door the sons and neighbors carried out your casket. I love this room." Carol Mowry, Ed.

Some Words from Carol

The Historical Society has been a busy place this Fall and part of Winter. Les Motschman, Jay Boeri, plus two of Jay's helpers moved the press from the Flower's home to the Historical Society with sidewalk supervision from Carol, Ildolyn Ahearn and Iloene Brennan. Once it was settled in place Bob Barrett went to work, cleaning, oiling, polishing and assembling. It is now in demonstrable condition. There are some parts that will have to be manufactured, we still haven't bought new rollers and a page of type will have to be set up so that we will be able to really display how it functions. Setting up the type and operating the whole machine is very labor intensive. I am filled with wonder at the work involved in the publishing process.

As we will be taking part in the Vermont History Expo, we will not do a trip this year. The two events would have been at about the same time. The theme this year at Expo is the Civil War. We have a number of artifacts that should make a nice display. The generosity of our members continues and we continue to be very grateful. Without the extra monetary donations, I'm not sure how we would have restored the press. Your dollars really do get put to work. This time period we wish to acknowledge Julie Hazen, Cordie Merritt and Joe Silver. Material gifts have been received from the following: Flood pictures from Carol Mowry and Judy Howland, No. Hartland photos of Rte 5 looking North, the original school with pupils, and the Community Church – both inside and out, from James Alexander, John Barrell Diaries 1869-1921 on CD from John Barrell, packet of photos, cards, and news clippings from Priscilla Atwood Knox.

The cookbook should be ready before March 1. It is in the final stages of getting an index done, Chiho is doing the cover, and Anne Adams is doing the proofreading. Judy Howland is writing the preface. It will have over 80 pages of recipes and I think it will be something that you will be happy to own. I have tried out some of the recipes myself and have been very pleased. If you would like to have copies mailed to you they will be \$18.75 each. We would ask for checks to be made out to the Hartland Historical Society and make a note that it is a donation. For those of you in town, they will be available at the Historical Society and at Damon Hall after March 1 at \$15 each copy. I am enclosing a separate slip just in case you don't want to cut the newsletter off.

In the spring letter, I hope to have some information about programs, a ribbon cutting for the press and other activities.

Carol Mowry, President

Mail to: Hartland Historical Society

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Please send -----copies of the book "Your Grandparents Recipes from the Hills of Hartland"

To: _____

Address _____

e-mail or phone _____

I have enclosed \$18.75 for each copy which includes the mailing.