



Hartland Historical Society

Newsletter Summer 2024

Editor: Les Motschman

Dear HHS Members,

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Work on refreshing various museum exhibits is continuing. The Society has recently taken delivery of a new printer which we hope will give us superior quality photos for use in our displays. We have had several visitors over the summer and were delighted to be given a desk from the old North Hartland school (see page 7). The desk was kindly donated by Barbara Currier Tracy who is the daughter of former North Hartland schoolteacher Helen Currier.

HHS Board

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## Geology of the Upper Valley

*Source: "Roadside Geology of Vermont and New Hampshire" by Bradford B. Van Diver  
(Hartland Public Library)*

Van Diver and his wife drove all the roads described in the guidebook. To explain the complex geological history of the two states he relied upon papers prepared by several geologists. I will try to pass on what is relevant to the creation of the Connecticut Valley as best I can.

The earth is at least 4600 million years old. Geologic time is measured in Periods, tens of millions of years long. The first 4000 million years is labeled Precambrian. Some may recognize the term Jurassic Period of 150 million years ago because of the dinosaur movies.

Plate tectonics is a new concept that dates from the 1960's. It is based on the earlier idea of continental drift proposed by the German scientist Alfred Wegener. Wegener saw that the coastlines along both sides of the vast Atlantic Ocean seem to complement each other. He suggested that Europe and Africa were once joined to the Americas and somehow drifted apart.

About 1300 million years ago the continents slowly came together to form a supercontinent called Pangaea. The northwestern part of Africa pushed into the North American coast. Starting about 120 million years ago the continents started to separate into the globe that we know today.

## BEFORE



## AFTER



The earth's crust is made up of about a dozen enormous plates. The plates move constantly and independently. Some collide, some drift apart and some grind past each other. Movement may be only a few inches each year but that can cause a lot of damage in a built-up area.

The oldest rocks in the "Twin State" region are found in southern Vermont. They record some of the state's earliest plate tectonics movements. The rocks are gneisses, quartzites and marbles of the Precambrian age 1300-1100 million years ago. Some of these rocks can be found in the Berkshires, the Hudson Highlands, Manhattan, and the Adirondacks of New York. There are scattered exposures in the Appalachians to the southwest and Newfoundland to the north. None of these rocks exist in New Hampshire. New Hampshire must once have been a piece of Africa or Europe. This would explain why the rocks of the two states are so different.

The Ice Age in North America and Europe began about two million years ago. It ended about 6000 years ago. There were four advances and retreats due to fluctuations in the climate. The last surge of ice peaked about 20,000 years ago. All of New England was buried under ice, a mile thick in some places. The ice sheet went as far south as Long Island. Temporary lakes formed between ice and high ground. In the Connecticut Valley the 200 mile long lake was called Lake Hitchcock. The long lake was probably a series of shorter lakes held back by huge blocks of ice.

Van Diver describes the Upper Valley area as particularly broad, well-terraced and the site of many very large sand and gravel quarries. Erosion of a 2-mile long terrace near Hartland left a ridge of sand and gravel 60 to 80 feet high.

The village of Windsor is situated on a river terrace. Looming above it is 3144 ft Mt. Ascutney. The mountain can be seen from many miles up and down the valley. Ascutney is held up by a small, isolated igneous (rock formed by solidification of magma or lava) pluton (a large igneous intrusion formed at depth) of the White Mountain magma (molten rock) series. The smaller Cuttingsville pluton 20 miles west is the end of the White Mountain series.

I've spent more time on this newsletter than most. I did get away one day for a field trip. In recent years I have been hiking and biking with a much younger cousin, She lives in southeastern NH and we meet to bike a section of the Northern Rail Trail or to hike. She wanted to climb Cardigan Mountain again. It was a beautiful day and quite a few people were enjoying the mountain. It's a one and a half mile trail to the treeless top with its panoramic views. The guidebook describes the Cardigan pluton as "one of the most striking igneous rocks of New England." With views in all directions several other mountains can be seen.



*(Photo courtesy of Cardigan Mountain State Park)*

Van Diver includes a picture of a very large boulder on a grassy hillside. The text says the early settlers gathered rocks to make walls and cellars for their cabins. Rocks moved by glaciers are called glacial erratics. This spring my cousin and I walked the trails at the John Hay Estate in Newbury, NH. There are large erratics in Lake Sunapee, in the woods along the shore and on the wooded hill above the estate. There are old roads, cellar holes, wells and stone walls on the now wooded hillside. I don't know why Van Driver didn't mention Lake Sunapee or Mt.Sunapee.

John Hay was a private secretary to Abraham Lincoln. He later became Secretary of State. In 1888 he began buying Newbury farms, accumulating nearly 1000 acres. In 1891 moved into the lakeview summerhouse. When he died there in 1905 his son Clarence continued to develop the estate. The John Hay Estate at The Fells is open to the public.

I would be interested to hear from members how they think of the "Twin States".

- I know Vermont leads all states in maple syrup production. New Hampshire is last on the list of states that produce maple syrup.
- I like New Hampshire's lakes.
- Vermont is more of an agricultural state.
- Interesting that Vermont's population center is in the northwest, New Hampshire's is in the southeast. As far apart as they could be.

Les Motschman

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Windows of the UU Church

By Judith Howland

This is taken from a talk previously given by Judith to members of the UU Church

Early in Paul's ministry here, he did a series of talks about the meanings of the symbols on the six stained glass windows in this sanctuary. He asked me to research a little information about the people and families whose names are on the windows. They were Hartland people, born mostly in the 19th century, so roughly 200 to 250 years ago. Most of the windows were installed in 1901; the Spear memorial window was dedicated twenty years later. I have listened on Sunday mornings while others spoke about the people in their lives who have influenced them. And I thought, "I can do that!" There are names on three of these windows who represent people in my extended family—my forefathers and my foremothers.

The first window is the one on the right side as you enter. It reads "In memory of C. G. Burnham and wife". If I were designing this window today, I probably would have written that a little differently. C. G. were the initials of Charles George Burnham, born in Pomfret, VT in 1810, and he did indeed have a wife. And she had a name of her own. She was Eliza Hadley Burnham and she was born 1811. Charles and Eliza lived on what we now call Rt 12—the Skunk Hollow Road—and they had two children: Charles J. and Susan. Susan, who was born in 1838 and died in 1932, lived her whole life in Hartland. She married Oscar Hemenway and they had three children: Florence Susan, Charles Burnham, and Irving O. (probably his middle name was Oscar, after his father).

Their daughter Florence Hemenway married Lyman Francis Cabot and they lived in Windsor where they raised two sons—Irving and Gerald. Put a pin in Lyman's name—he was never known by his middle name of Francis. Their home was the gray house just across Rt 5 (Main Street) from the Constitution House. Lyman Cabot was the undertaker in Windsor and also had a furniture store. Lyman's nephew Willard Cabot lived with the family as a young man and he learned the trade of an undertaker. Then he moved to Woodstock where he established the Cabot Funeral Home, which is still owned by his family.

Florence and Lyman's son Gerald, born in 1900, married my mother's sister, Ruth Spear, so he was my uncle by marriage. Uncle Gerald lived his whole life in the house where he was born. He was a graduate of Middlebury College and was a veteran of World War I. Well, sort of. The war ended before he had to leave college. Uncle Gerald was a banker in Windsor; his bank--the Windsor County National Bank-- was located next door to the Windsor House on Main St. It's now a clothing store. Gerald and Ruth were members of the Unitarian Church in Windsor which was just "upstreet" from their house. They could walk to church. When that church closed, they came here to this church.

Uncle Gerald often used some colorful language, which I CAN repeat here in this sanctuary. If he was surprised or wanted to emphasize something he would say "Holy Gee Mackerel!" And if he wanted to really emphasize something he would say "Holy Jumped Up Jee-rusalem!" I could spend all morning talking about him—his pipe, his Christmas eggnog, his colorful, polyester, patchwork trousers, but I have two more windows to consider.

The third window on the left—the first one to my right—has the names of several members of the Gates family. They are descended from Zelotes Gates and his wife Margaret Rawson. Zelotes, the son of Captain Stephen Gates and his wife Demaris Howe, was born in 1755 in Rutland, MA, one of eleven children. His wife Margaret, born in 1761, (the same year the town of Hartland was chartered) was the daughter of John Rawson and Elizabeth Bruce.

They were among the first settlers of Hartland; their house just off Weed Road was one of the first houses built in town and it is still owned by their descendants.



(UU Church pictured on 22nd August 1906)

Their son Benjamin Franklin Gates was born in 1797 and lived until 1870. His wife Mary Crosby was born in 1797 and lived until 1858. Their daughter, Mary Frances Gates—or perhaps she was Frances Mary Gates—married George W. Spear, whose name is on the first window, which I will get to later.

Frances Mary and George W. had three sons—Franklin, who was a farmer who stayed on the home farm, Ernest, a businessman in Woodstock, and Stanley, who was a Universalist minister in Dexter, Maine and Beverly, Massachusetts.

You have frequently heard Paul Sawyer speak of the Rev. Stanley Gates Spear. Stanley had great affection for the town of Hartland, the people of Hartland, and the people of this congregation. He often spoke lovingly of “the hills of Hartland.” He was never the settled minister here, but he did all he could to see that this congregation and the congregation of the Brick Church stayed in business, even master-minding a connection known as a yoked parish, which he called the Hartland Religious Association. He returned to Hartland for funerals, for weddings, and for baptisms. Stanley also played an important role in the lives of his brother Franklin’s children who were very young when their father died unexpectedly. Franklin and Winnie’s children were Elizabeth and George.

Elizabeth was a registered nurse who worked in the city for many years, but always returned to the family farm known as Beloved Acres. When she became the school nurse for Vermont Academy, she had summers off, and that’s when she established Farm Home Camp.

One of her campers was me, at age ten. Another one was my cousin Bill, who was probably even younger than that. Also, the headmaster at Vermont Academy, Mr. Tuttle, sent his children to camp here. One of the Tuttle children moved to Hartland a few years ago and lives in the second house on the Quechee Road, going north from Damon Hall. Her name is Hatsie McGraw. And Hatsie’s son, Davis McGraw, lives in Windsor, has visited this church, and is chairman of the Windsor School Board.

Elizabeth’s brother George worked for First Boston; he and his wife Celia Stone Spear had two daughters—Emily and Elizabeth—who still have connections to the property here that Zelotes and Margaret settled so long ago.



(The Spear Farm, date unknown)

I need to leave this window, although there is much more I could say, and go to the first window, on the left as you enter this sanctuary. The Spears listed here are descended from George Spear, born about 1613 in Yarmouth or Sheffield, England who emigrated to Boston in 1642. I'll start with Joshua Spear, a wheelwright, who was born in 1785 in Boston. Joshua married Sybel Omond, the daughter of a sea captain. They were married in 1807 in Boston by Rev. William Ellery Channing, an early Unitarian minister.

Joshua and Sybel moved to Vermont with their children. They lived in Reading, but many family members are buried in the Jenne Cemetery in Hartland.

Their son George Spear, a farmer, married Clarissa Weeden who was born in Hartland in 1809. She was the daughter of Samuel Weeden and Marcy Miller. (This is where I once got the idea that I was related to the Marcy family in town. Not! It was the Miller family).

George and Clarissa's son Francis Edgar Spear ---sometimes known as Edgar Francis---was born in 1842 in Reading. Edgar, a farmer, married Lucy Maria Ainsworth who was born March 14, 1846---ninety eight years minus one day before I was born. Edgar and Lucy were my great grandparents.

Edgar and Lucy had three children: Arthur Edgar (born in 1873), Edwin Ainsworth (born in 1874), and Flora Amelia (born in 1877). Arthur married and moved to New Jersey where he managed a poultry farm. Flora married and moved to Worcester, MA. My grandfather, Edwin, and his cousin Franklin, both farmers, were close friends and were the only ones of their families who stayed in Hartland. Thus it was a great blow to Ed when Frank died unexpectedly while still a young man.

Another son of George and Clarissa's was George Weeden Spear, born in 1844—the George W. of that window. He and Frances Gates were married in 1866 in this church. Their three sons were Franklin George (born in 1868), Ernest Alton (born in 1871), and Stanley Gates (born in 1873).

There are so many stories I could tell, but time does not allow. You may already be thinking you've heard enough of what the Bible calls "the begats." Here is one of my personal connections:

Celia Stone Spear was a graduate of Northfield Seminary, now known as Northfield Mount Hermon School. When she was serving on the school's board of trustees, she encouraged me to apply as a student there, which is why I graduated from Northfield and not from Windsor High School. Both of Celia and George's daughters—Emily and Elizabeth—also graduated from Northfield.

And finally, I draw your attention to the angel in the Gates window. Cousin Elizabeth told me as a child she often got through a long church sermon by concentrating on that angel. At her memorial service here, the sun shone through that part of the window. And at my mother's funeral here, the sun shone through that angel. When my father died, we held a brief committal service at the cemetery and there was a sudden downpour. I was certain there would be no sunshine in the angel window at his funeral. I was wrong. The sun did come out after the shower. As it always does.

In closing I have brought an artifact for show and tell. When my grandfather Ed Spear was a young boy, his parents went away, probably for an afternoon and left the three children alone. That was long enough for Eddie and his brother to wash the buggy. When their parents returned, Eddie excitedly told them what they had done—they had cleaned the buggy! "Artie washed 'er and I greased 'er." The boys had used a wool blanket of Lucy's for the greasing part. This is what is known as "the Artie washed 'er and I greased 'er blanket."

Judith Howland

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## Four Corners School Desk



Barbara Currier Tracy, daughter of former schoolteacher Helen Currier, recently visited the Society along with her son and they brought with them this school desk from the old North Hartland school.

Helen Currier (1902-2001) taught at North Hartland for some 43 years. She was also instrumental in reviving the North Hartland Church. In the early 1940's the church was not being used. Helen was teaching a Christmas course and realized how little the children actually knew about the religious aspects of the season. Together with a young, enthusiastic Methodist minister from White River Junction the church was put back into action.

We are most grateful to Barbara and her family for the gift of the desk.

# Membership Form: 2024 - 2025

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Please return to: Treasurer, Hartland Historical Society, PO Box 198, Hartland, VT 05048. Thank you!

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