



# Hartford Historical Society

The Garipay House • 1461 Maple Street  
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HARTFORD • QUECHEE • WEST HARTFORD • WHITE RIVER JUNCTION • WILDER

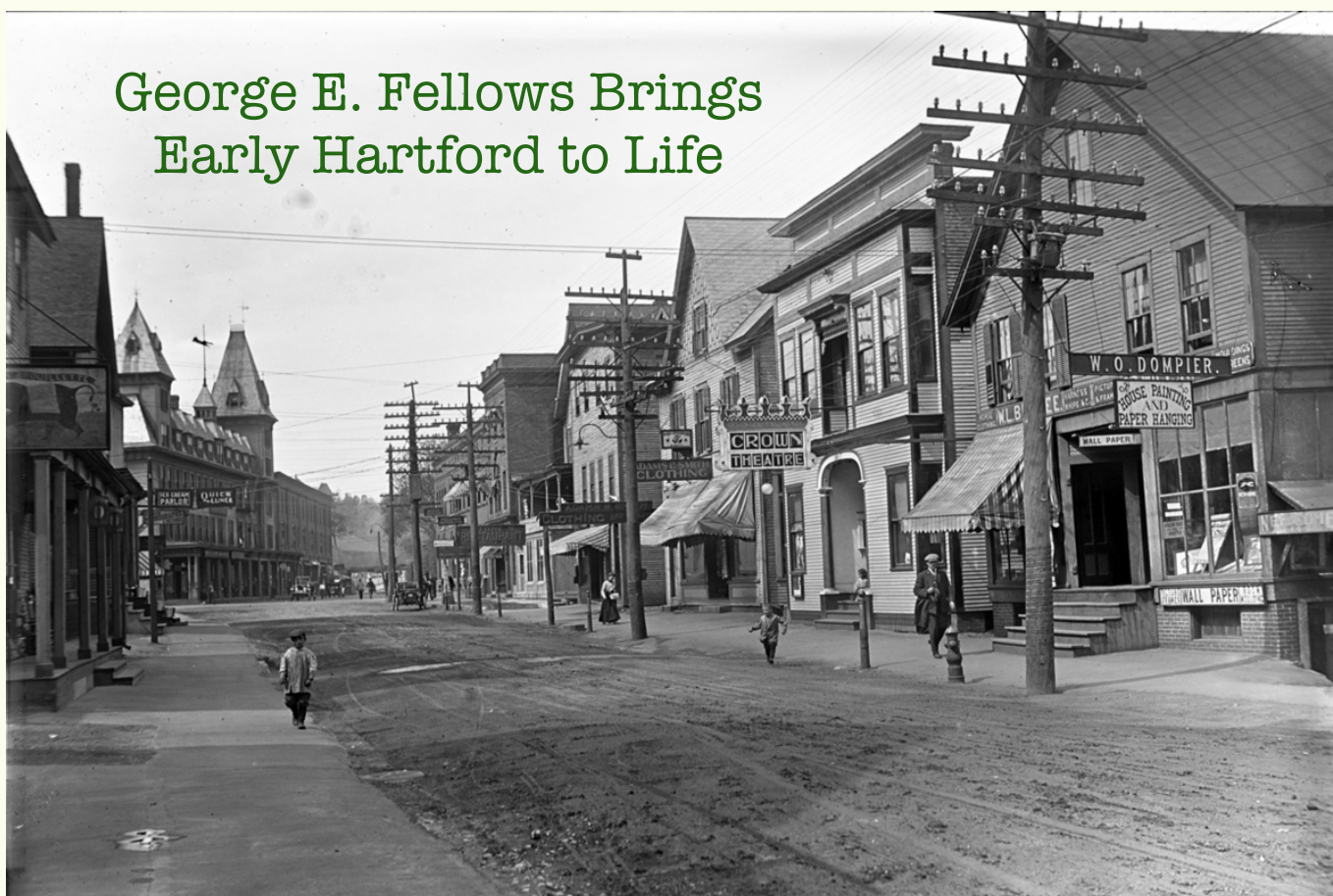


Volume 35, No. 2

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May-June 2022

## George E. Fellows Brings Early Hartford to Life



In 1883, George E. Fellows married Jennie Halleck and opened a photography studio in South Royalton, VT. The business didn't last and they soon moved to Lyme, NH. Fellows is not mentioned in local papers until 1886 when he and his wife welcomed a daughter. In October of that year, they moved to White River Junction where George opened a small photo studio.

In March, 1888, the *St. Albans Daily Messenger* reports that Fellows was one of two photographers who captured the testing of Hartford's new bridge across the White River, which replaced the one destroyed in the tragic train wreck of 1887. The dramatic photos show twelve locomotives with fully loaded coal tenders parked on the 650-foot bridge to show that it could support 854 tons.

The following year, Fellows and F.E. Burr purchased the photographic studio of H.H.H. Langill in White River Junction. *The Landmark* reported, "G.E. Fellows and F.E. Burr of Hanover, have formed a partnership and bought out Mr. Langill, who has carried on the photograph business in the Wheeler block for some time. These gentlemen are both artists of no mean skill and we predict for them a prosperous career. They can be found at their studio in Wheeler's *George Fellows opened a photo studio in White River Junction with partner F.E. Burr in 1889. Fellows purchased Burr's share the following year and documented the local area until 1915. His sign hangs from the bank block in this photo of South Main Street.*

*Continued on page 4.*

## From the Editor . . .

Thanks to Jim Kenison for launching a new Facebook group for the society. Nearly 300 members already. The URL is on our back cover.

Over the years, I have seen a handful of photos taken by George Fellows who first opened a photographic studio in White River Junction in 1886. Recently, we learned that more than a thousand of his glass plate negatives reside at Dartmouth's Rauner Library. A guide to the collection shows that Fellows documented many parts of the Upper Valley around the turn of the Twentieth Century, and we showcase some of his Hartford views in this issue.

In April, HHS board member Pat Rondeau regaled an appreciative audience with tales from her youth on South Main Street in White River Junction at our first public presentation in two years. Pat's memories of wartime Hartford are still vibrant and a few highlights are presented in this issue. Our next presentation will feature Chris McKinley on June 8.

This issue, we also have a presentation given to the Hartford Historical Society by Julia Savage in 1951 as it appeared in *The Landmark*. Julia was a noted local historian as well as a teacher and longtime assistant librarian at the West Hartford Library. Thank you to Sandy Audsley, Sandie Cary, Nadine Hodgdon, and Allen Savage for finding her photo.

In 1895, students at the Brockway School held a lyceum to mark the end of the school year. Our report from the Vermont Standard notes that Ada, Henry, and Lawrence Pitkin had almost no marks that year, which is amazing since they lost their home to fire in March.

Want to help around the Garipay House? Please contact Pat Stark. We really appreciate it!

Is your mailing address yellow? If so, please take a minute to join or renew your membership using the PayPal form on our website. The address is on our back cover. Thanks!

*Scott Fletcher, Editor*

## Mrs. Grace Brouillette

Driving through Wilder the other day, Roy Black pointed out a large home next door to the Wilder School that once belonged to his teacher and principal, Grace Brouillette. "Mrs. Brouillette was my sixth grade teacher," he said, "Boy, she was sure no nonsense. One day I was talking or something and she said, 'Roy, you get control of yourself or I'll get control of you!'"

Roy continued with a grin, "Another thing I remember about her was we were reciting something one time and at the very end it had the word 'hell' in it and when we got to that word everybody really called it out very loud and this disturbed her. What I remember is she decided that the word 'hell' was unacceptable and in the future we would say, 'Hades' instead. I remember that distinctly. She was quite a stern disciplinarian but a genuinely nice person."

### The Mission Statement of the Hartford Historical Society

To acquire, identify and preserve  
information and artifacts related to  
Hartford's past and communicate knowledge  
of local history through programs,  
publications, and other interaction with the  
community.



## Hartford Historical Society

Post Office Box 547, Hartford, VT 05047-0547

<http://www.hartfordhistory.org>

[info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com)

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## Pat Rondeau Spins Charming Tales of Wartime White River Junction

Pat Rondeau told lively stories from her youth to an appreciative and socially-distanced audience at the first presentation from the Hartford Historical Society in two years. The event, on April 13 at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ, was emceed by HHS Board Chairman Lannie Collins.

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***Pat recalled a cold winter when her aunt and grandmother pieced together samples of woolen fabric into warm, but itchy, blankets. Turned out Pat was allergic to wool.***

Rondeau was born, Patricia Ann Thurston, at her parents home in Wilder in 1938. She was the second daughter born to Roderick and Bernice Thurston, whose family eventually included four girls and two boys.

Many of Pat's childhood memories featured her neighbors on South Main Street in White River Junction. She called it a wonderful place to grow up as hardworking parents from

varied ethnic backgrounds kept a communal eye on each other's children.

She recalled that her father sometimes worked three jobs to provide for his family. He also enlisted in the U.S. Navy toward the end of World War II.

One year when he was driving Bob Hanley's taxicab, her father picked up a passenger bound for Burlington on Christmas Eve. He didn't return until after midnight, but the fare allowed him to put gifts under the tree.

Pat said that during World War Two, her older sister Betty contributed her long hair for use as crosshairs in top secret Norden bombsights. These famous devices significantly increased the accuracy of American bombers. Recently, writers have questioned whether human hair was actually used in the bombsights, but Betty's contribution remains a point of pride in the Thurston family.

Pat recalled a cold winter when her aunt and grandmother pieced together samples of woolen fabric into warm, but itchy blankets. "I liked being warm but hated being itchy," she said. Turned out Pat was allergic to wool. She also recalled her French Canadian neighbors Eva and Joe Gregoire. Eva had lost her left arm due to illness, but she still excelled in cooking and gardening. When Pat's mother was confined to bed after a miscarriage, Eva brought the family a delicious lunch every day. She also set aside a small garden for Pat and showed her how to plant Zinnias and Bachelor's Buttons. Pat recall's that Joe's tomatoes and potatoes were the envy of the neighborhood.

There was a neighbor's dog called Kate, after singer Kate Smith, who howled along with the phonograph. Also a cocker spaniel named Jiggs who accidentally pulled a leg off Pat's doll, Susie.

All in all, it was a memorable time and Pat, now the last living member of her family, still recalls much of it.



*Top, when Patty Thurston's mother curled her hair using a mail order product, her father had to cajole her into going to school. She called this her, "Jigsy Look," after the family's cocker spaniel. Roderick Thurston joined the U.S. Navy as World War II was winding down, to the surprise of his wife and kids. Bernice Thurston and daughter Patty in front of their house on South Main Street in White River Junction.*

# Julia Savage Presents a History of Hartford

*From the Landmark, September 6, 1951*

At a recent meeting of the Hartford Historical Society, Miss Julia Savage was the guest speaker. Her subject was the history of the Jericho District. An interesting account of her address is as follows.

Among the many grants made by Gov. Wentworth in 1761 was that of Hartford, which was the first township chartered after the close of the French and Indian War. It was thought that the reason why this one was chosen first, was because two Strong brothers, Elijah and Benajah, were surveyors during the war and they knew how rich it was in white pine and other products and that it was superior to all the other towns in respect to the splendid waterpower and mill privileges, on

the three rivers that watered the township--the Connecticut River, the Ottauquechee River, and the White River.

The charter was granted July 4, 1761. Hartford was organized March 8, 1768. Historians disagree as to who was the first settler. Some claim that Benjamin Wright moved into town in 1763, and built the first house ever erected in town. This was located a little below the mouth of the White River, near the Connecticut River. Others claim that the first settlers were the three Strong brothers who came up from Connecticut in 1763. Elijah Strong settled at the mouth of White River, on the south side of the river. He bought 360 acres of land for less than six cents an acre. Solomon Strong settled not far from the Will LaBelle place, and Benajah Strong settled at the center of the town.

A short time ago someone said, "They tell me there was a King's Highway from White River Junction through the center of the town." There were at least

two Kings Highways in town. One was over Christian Street through the center of the town and through Quechee. The other went through White River Junction, through the center of town, and through the Brockway District to Pomfret. Some claim it continued to Montreal. The two roads crossed at the center of the town.

About 1803, the turnpike road was built on what is now Route 14, past our house. This formed the main route of travel between Liverpool, England and Montreal, Canada by the way of Boston, Concord, and White River Junction. It was not an uncommon thing to see, on a winters day, as many as thirty two-horse teams passing down the river loaded with all kinds of farm products and returning with groceries, etc. The first tollgate in Hartford was located just above our house, near Lyman's ferry. It is related that Elias Lyman, at one time desired to send \$1000 to Boston but didn't know of any way that it could be safely sent, so as he was sending some clover seed to Boston, he enclosed the money in a bag of the seed. The team was on the road eight days, but reached Boston safely where the teamster learned the value of his load.

Turnpike roads proved so profitable in Vermont that fifty companies were formed but they became so many that it spoiled the profits and then the farmers were complaining of the heavy toll so they began building their own roads, as near the turnpike roads as possible to shun the turnpike roads. So the turnpike companies began surrendering their charters, so most of the turnpike roads became public roads.

In 1773, Thomas Hazen of Connecticut received from the proprietors 1,000 acres of land for the money his son Joshua hired for the proprietors and he made additional purchases so he owned at least 2,600 acres of land or nearly one-tenth of the whole town. In 1775, he built the first two-story house in the town, which is now the home farm of his great, great, great grandson Henry Hazen. He lived with his son Asa. On the twentieth of August 1781, he gave each of his twelve children 120 acres of land and reserved the same quantity for himself. Five hundred and seventy-six acres constitute what is now known as Jericho, the center being near the intersection of the roads leading from White River and West Hartford. The lands were owned by Hazens for many years but the John Hazen farm is the only one still owned by a Hazen.

The names Jericho, Dothan and Goshen were given



to them by Rev. Aaron Hutchinson the first minister to preach in Hartford, Pomfret, and Woodstock. Hurricane Hill was named that because there was a hurricane there soon after the town began to be settled.

Mr. Tucker described Centerville as a hamlet located midway between Hartford Village and West Hartford. It has a gristmill, a sawmill, and a dozen houses. He must have counted some of the houses outside of the hamlet, but not all of the houses in the district. The sawmill and gristmill were owned by several different parties from 1857 to April 1886. Then Moore and Madden, having burned out at Hartford, bought the sawmill, the gristmill, one dwelling house, and all water privileges. They did a good business for several years. They began buying whole grain by the car load and grinding and selling it. The railroad put in a spur track about half way between the two bridges so the cars of grain were put off there. Later, grain was shipped in all ground so it spoiled the profit of mill. Moore and Madden bought a feed store in Hartford, so the machinery was taken out and the mill went down.

Just north of Mr. Hathorn's house is a tablet, with this inscription, "This tablet is in honor of Phineas Parkhurst who, though wounded, rode from Royalton, VT to West Lebanon, NH on October 16, 1780, warning the settlers of the Indians. He halted here at the Tilden Tavern and Stephen Tilden fired the alarm gun." The militia failed to reach Royalton in season to be of any service. It is claimed that Phineas Parkhurst held the bullet between his thumb and finger until he got to a doctor at West Lebanon.

Luther Bartholomew came to Jericho and located on Mr. Cates place. Tucker gives the date as 1794 but *Childs Gazeteer* gives it as 1783. He worked on his farm till the day he died, then the farm went to his son Noah who died in 1871 leaving the farm to his son Marcus.

Luther Bartholomew had a sister Olive who married Daniel Hazen. They lived where Mr. Nott lives. She was well used in care of the sick and was often called to attend persons living at a distance. She received an urgent call one dark night following a storm. The invalid was five miles away across the White River which swollen deep and swift. There was no means of crossing except to ford. She ordered her favorite horse and being tied to his back the horse swam the river and carried her safely to her sick friend.

Marcus Bartholomew had a brother George who graduated from Dartmouth and was principal of the Bartholomew English and Classical School of Cincinnati, OH, which he founded in 1875. Although

Merton Nott's farm and Mr. Wiggins' place are in Norwich, at a school meeting in 1845 they were voted into the Jericho School district. Merton Nott said someone bought an acre of land across the road from his house in 1820.

In 1821, he bought another acre on the same side as the house is and built a little house. A part of that is in the present house. Jericho has always been a farming district. Years ago, nearly every farmer kept sheep and, of course, had a yoke of oxen but later the price of wool dropped, so they decided to keep more cows

and make butter. Many farmers sold wood in the winter, and drew it to Hartford and White River.

They also raised a large amount of apples and other fruits. One year they, or the company who bought their apples, had cars set off at the spur and loaded them there. One year, Elijah Hazen, who lived where Elias Lyman lives, loaded a carload of cabbages there. Harper Hazen had apples and other fruits and products so he hired a man certain days each week to peddle for him. He peddled fruits, vegetables, maple products, butter and cheese, vinegar, boiled cider, etc. The peddler was an odd fellow. When he saw anyone he'd call out, "All happy." If it was a man he'd usually call out, "All happy. How's your wife? So he was known by the younger set and many of the older ones as, "All happy."

The first Methodist meetinghouse in town was built in Jericho in 1845. It cost \$1000 and would seat about 200 persons. In 1874, the meetinghouse was sold and removed to North Hartland where it was used for business purposes. The proceeds of the sale were invested in building a meetinghouse in Hartland. In 1841, there was preaching in the old brick schoolhouse in Jericho. In 1849, the present schoolhouse was built by Joseph Savage costing as follows: schoolhouse \$475; painting, paint, etc., \$46.32; furnishings \$16.60; lot, \$10; recording deed \$1. Truman Savage built the privy for \$4.50; making total cost \$563.42.



*Julia Savage in 1951.  
Photo courtesy Allen Savage.*



block every day in the week.” *The Landmark*, March 15, 1889

In July 1889, F.E. Burr purchased Fellow’s share of the business and Fellows opened a studio in Claremont, NH. The following year, however, Fellows returned to White River Junction and bought the business back from Burr. He would document people and places in and around Hartford for the next twenty-five years.

Fellows used the prevailing technique, which was to spread a light-sensitive silver gelatin on a five-inch wide glass plate. Fellows advertised that the process was “instantaneous,” meaning he could photograph moving scenes and make portraits of children.

Another service Fellows offered was crayon portraits, which he did by projecting an image from a negative onto a sheet of drawing paper and then rendering a color image by hand using ink and crayons.

In 1896, *The Landmark* noted that, “George E. Fellows' studio in the new building south of the National Bank is a pleasant place to visit, whether one contemplates sitting for his photograph or not. The specimens of photographic and crayon work are finely done, and their variety adds interest to the collection.” *The Landmark*, August 7, 1896.

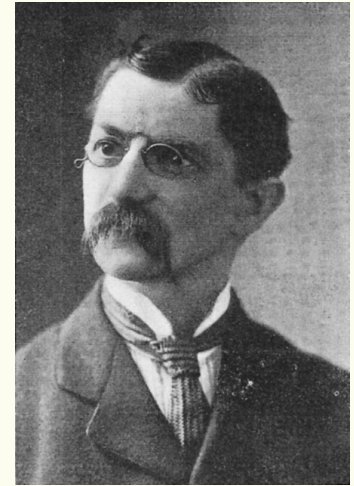
Jennie Fellows died in 1906, and George continued to make photographs in White River Junction and neighboring communities. In 1915, George Fellows married Emma Lockwood and purchased a large farm in North Charlestown, NH.

That same year, he sold the photography business and, at some point, gave his collection of 1,046 glass plates and eighty-five celluloid negatives to Hanover photographer Henry H. Barrett. They are now archived by the Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth College.

The collection documents life around Hartford including forgotten scenes like the dam on the White River that powered the Hartford Woolen Mill and lively activity at the Vermont State Fair. Fellows also captured his farmhouse, outbuildings, and animals in North Charlestown.

George Fellows was often seen around Hartford at Odd Fellows and Masons meetings until he died in 1931. He rests in the Hartford Cemetery.

*George Fellows captured the test of the new railroad bridge across the White River the year after the tragic train wreck of 1887. Many of Fellows' non-studio photographs are archived at Dartmouth's Rauner Special Collections Library.*



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G. E. FELLOWS, F. E. BURR.  
W. R. Junction, Vt., March 15, 1889. 52 1y



*Top left, Fellows captured the White River Junction train station ablaze in 1911. Top right, self-portrait. Center right, spectators watch the train station burn. Bottom right, the old Junction House sometime before being destroyed by fire in 1878. It was rebuilt the following year but burned again in January 1925 just weeks after being renamed the Hotel Coolidge.*





**Another service Fellows offered was crayon portraits, which he did by projecting an image from a negative onto a sheet of drawing paper and then rendering a color image by hand using ink and crayons.**



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PHOTOGRAPHER,  
White River Junction, - - Vt.

*Top left, a dam on the White River powered the Hartford Woolen Mill. Top right, sleighs turn onto South Main Street. Middle left, tents in Wilder may have provided shelter for mill workers. Bottom left, a former brewery in West Hartford was converted to an inn by Alvan Tucker in 1838. It burned in 1924.*



## “Gertie Buck” Was John J. Dewey’s Pet Steam Car

*Vermont Standard, January 22, 1931*

The death of John J. Dewey, former president of the Woodstock Railway, banker, manufacturer, and public utility magnate recalls to many of his old time employees the heyday of “Gertie Buck” his steam car in which he made many pleasure trips up and down the railroad line.

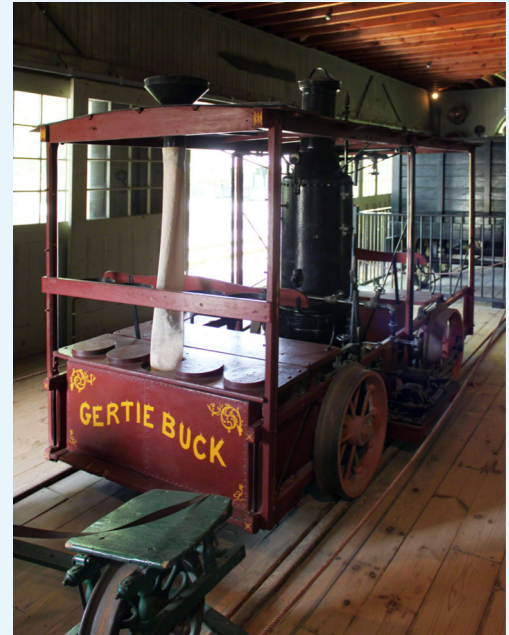
***She worked like a charm on soft coal and the pressure in the boiler would take her over Shallie’s Hill a-flying.***

Down near the Dewey’s Mills station on the Woodstock Railway’s 14 miles of track will be found a small, wayside building for these many years the home of “Gertie” and her

resting place of honor now that her days of usefulness are over and she has been partly dismantled.

Purchased by Dewey in 1877 from the M.M. Buck Company of St. Louis, she was used exclusively as a pleasure vehicle over his line. As termed by one of the section men working under Frank Shattuck in the Quechee territory 43 years ago last summer, “on a clear rail she could do a bit better than 30 miles an hour and that was good considering her two small engines with one cylinder each.” “She worked like a charm on soft coal and the pressure in the boiler would take her over Shallie’s Hill a-flying.”

“She was sturdy and well-balanced. The seats for the 12 or 14 passengers she was capable of carrying were placed to the sides of the boiler and in the rear. The water jacket was also in the rear. Over all was a canopy for protection from sun and inclement weather.”



*The Gertie Buck was once a common sight on the railway between White River Junction and Woodstock. She is now on display at the Shelburne Museum.*

## Brockway School Holds Year-end Lyceum

*Vermont Standard, June 27, 1895*

School In the Brockway district (No. 4) closed June 21 with the usual Friday afternoon lyceum. Geo. C. Brockway, school director, and several parents and friends were present. The lyceum consisted of songs, recitations, essays, and a debate. The question, "Which are better, summer sports or winter sports?" was decided in favor of summer sports. The number of pupils during the term was fourteen. The following eight had no marks: John, Anna and Jennie Brockway, Ada and Henry Pitkin, Johnny Wood, Andrew and Lyman Brockway. Lawrence Pitkin entered school on Monday of the second week, and for the rest of the term lost no time. For the last two years Ada Pitkin has lost but one-half day, and Henry Pitkin none. Margaret E. Seaver, teacher.



*The Brockway School on Quechee West Hartford Road was one of numerous schools built across town in 1807. It closed in 1945 and is now a private residence.*

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THANK YOU!

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## Yesterday's News

### **Sturdy Specs** (*The Landmark*, January 18, 1895)

W. Howard Tucker has a pair of spectacles that are more than one hundred years old. They are of German manufacture and are in a hinged steel case and bear the appearance of long usage.

### **Knock, Knock** (*Vermont Journal*, May 9, 1874)

There is a family living in the shanty near the crossing between White River Village and the Junction, and a party of young men, some of whom having families of their own, thought they would take the law into their own hands last Saturday night, and clean the thing out. But the inmates concluded not to be cleaned out, and were prepared for the siege with firearms. It seems there was a man stopping there who was wanted by the boys. As they had gathered round the door, and one of them had hold of the door handle, there was gun fired from the inside, the shot of which passed through the door, and hit two of the intruders. One of them was wounded by ten or twelve shot, and the other by a less number, and a third escaped with the loss of part of a button from his coat. The one who was the worst injured is still confined to his bed but doing well.

### **Who's Counting?**

Widow Burns has the measles—a lot of them. *The Landmark*, December 8, 1883

### **Ouch!** (*The Valley Sun*, November 13, 1885)

Mrs. Potter had a crochet hook accidentally thrust into her wrist the other day. While a surgeon was being called the pain was so great that Mrs. P. kept trying at it and finally removed it herself. Good courage.

### **It's in the Books** (*The Landmark*, April 27, 1894)

With their characteristic thoughtfulness, the Messrs. Dewey (Dewey's Mills) have fitted up a room over their office to be used as a library and reading room for the benefit of the mill operatives, liberally supplying the same with books and papers.

### **Busy Busy**

Mrs. Wm. Clark seems to be the busiest woman in town. In addition to the care of her family and a large dairy, she has in process of construction a handsome silk bed quilt made of infinitesimal pieces, two large rugs, and a lot of smaller work in the shape of sofa cushions, ornamental milking stools, etc., with which she occupies, "spare minutes." *The Landmark*, November 6, 1886

### **Batter Up**

The West Hartford nine came down to play with the Quechee nine a few days since and this time were defeated, the score standing 35 to 19 in favor of the Q's. *The Landmark*, June 28, 1895

### **Monumental!** (*The Landmark*, July 19, 1889.)

Miss Mae Gates has recently purchased a monument for the family lot in the cemetery, which is a very fine affair. The cost of the monument and expense of putting it in place in the cemetery was something over \$1000.

### **No Horsing Around**

Sunday morning, Geo. Brockway harnessed a trusty horse to the milk wagon, went to the house and left the horse standing near the barn. Probably the horse knew it was necessary to be at the creamery on time and that the driver was tardy, so he started for the village, arriving at the creamery in safety, stopping at the platform for the milk to be weighed. At that time, a telephone was received at the post office inquiring for the team. The cans were emptied and filled, ready to start home, when a driver arrived. Such a horse is worth owning, as it would be able to save time. *Chelsea Herald*, August 28, 1902

With potatoes at \$1 per bushel, pork 6 1-2 cents and beef 5 to 6 cents live weight, maple syrup \$1 per gallon, and butter 30 cents, it does seem as though farmers might make a living and take *The Landmark* besides.

*The Landmark*, April 8, 1882.

## Hartford Historical Society

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### HHS Calendar

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**MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS** are open to the public on the first Monday of the month at the Garipay House at 6 p.m. (Please check for exact date.)

**Wednesday, June 8, 2022** - **“Hartford Train Stations Past and Present,”** presented by Chris McKinley. 7:00 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ; 1721 Maple St., Hartford Village. Refreshments.

**Saturday, June 11, 2022** - **“Memorial Dedication Service for REAL DAUGHTER Sarah Tilden Hazen,”** presented by the Daughters of the American Revolution. 1:30 p.m. at the Hartford Cemetery. Reception follows at the Valley Bible Church, 851 Fairview Terrace, WRJ. RSVP by June 1, to [rhbook@gmail.com](mailto:rhbook@gmail.com).

The **Genealogy Center** on the second floor of the Hartford Library is open Fridays from 2-6 p.m. and by appointment. Please call Carole Haehnel at 802/295-3974 or email her at: [chaehnel151@comcast.net](mailto:chaehnel151@comcast.net). Interested in helping residents explore their family histories? Please contact us at [info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@hartfordhistoricalsociety.com).

### Websites

**Hartford Historical Society:** <http://www.hartfordhistory.org/>

**HHS Membership Form:** [http://www.hartfordhistory.org/?page\\_id=437](http://www.hartfordhistory.org/?page_id=437)

**Hartford VT Historical Society Facebook Group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hartfordvthistory>

**Hartford History Timeline:** <https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1456118/History-of-Hartford-Vermont/>

**Very Vermont - Stories from the Green Mountains:** <https://veryvermont.exposure.co/very-vermont>