



The Chronicler

Newsletter of the Hartland Historical Society, Inc.
Gaylord House Museum, 141 Center Street, West Hartland

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HartlandHistoricalSociety.com

Fall Edition 2015

Sunday, October 4, 2pm

Fall Members Meeting, W.H. Library

All welcome to attend! Short Business Meeting followed by TBD



West Mountain Singers photo: Ed Baldwin, Sally Dewey, Grace Jones & Virginia Monteith (the girls are Ransom Family relatives)

Right photo of Kane Family relatives: Carole Vincent, sister to Edith, Cody Kane, granddaughter of Joe and Joe's wife Edith

26th Annual Blueberry Picnic Recalls Bygone Days

"Pick a berry, put it in your bucket, then we'll make some pie."

Excerpted from a song written by Cindy Rines in 2008

By Ann Briek

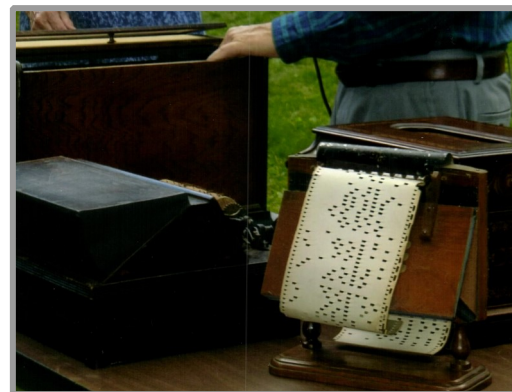
A lovely August Sunday welcomed approximately sixty attendees to The Gaylord House for the 26th Annual Blueberry Picnic hosted by the Hartland Historical Society. Nostalgia for the halcyon days when blueberries covered so much of Hartland was remembered through music, stories, dancing and blueberry desserts.

Music was provided by the West Mountain Singers. This lively local group of Hartland residents consists of Ransom Family and other local musicians.

After lunch, all gathered for a moment of silence to honor recently deceased volunteers who had served the Hartland Historical Society (Gert Lilliendahl, Elinor Clark, Joe Kane & Neil Mueller). Roxanne and Cody Kane shared blueberry tales from Joe Kane's life. As a boy Joe loved to pick blueberries as an alternative to less enjoyable farm chores. To his last days the happy memories in those blueberry fields remained clear in his mind.

A second story shared by Sally Laubin Jones recalled Will “Huckleberry” Hayes, owner of Hayes General Store, who according to the Hartford Courant, in the summer of 1906 delivered over 1000 bushels of blueberries to Hartford residents. The Hartford Courant also reported that practically all the blueberries supplied to Hartford came from East Hartland. Those bushels were filled by Hartland residents, many of them children, who picked berries morning till night from July to September each year. Following the stories a “blueberry dance” was demonstrated to go along with the Cindy Rines song “Blueberries Wild”, and all were invited to join in.

The featured speakers at the picnic, Nelson and Beverly Pease, shared their extensive knowledge of historical instruments. Nelson Pease was asked by the Hartland Historical Society to inspect the recently donated seraphine, an early American reed instrument, circa 1830. He took it apart and looked everywhere for a manufacturer mark. What he found was all indications that it was handmade and no manufacturer mark. To the delight of everyone he played it for a brief time. The seraphine was traced back to Rev. Nathaniel Gaylord first pastor of the Second Church of Christ, now the Second Congregational Church of Hartland. The instrument had been in the Gaylord family for over 170 years and now resides with the Hartland Historical Society Gaylord House Museum.



Mr. and Mrs. Pease (shown above) also led guests in singing several Stephen Foster tunes accompanied by a later reed instrument and described several mechanical instruments from the 1800's. The Pease collection is located in Palmer, MA and open to the public.

The day ended as it began with blueberries front and center as everyone enjoyed delicious blueberry desserts donated by guests and Historical Society volunteers. Today the cows no longer groom the fields making way for blueberry bushes. The trees have made those fields their home now but Hartland residents will always recall that time in their past when blueberries were the fodder of happy stories, music and song.

“Blueberry, blueberry, blueberry pie! Chomp a piece down with whipped cream piled up high.”
Excerpted from lyrics written by David Ransom in recollection of the 25th Blueberry Picnic in 2014

General Store Memories (Junction of Rts 20 & 181), West Hartland CT

Marsha Ransom, April 2015



Early history of property: In 1792, Titus Allen deeded the property to **Rideout Moore** of Granby, CT. The Rideout Moore house, located on the Hartland-Granby Turnpike, was built around 1800, where Mr. Moore operated a very successful hotel business for many years. He died in 1848. Other owners included Carlos Holcomb; Wm Spencer, Jr.; Fred Spencer; Carl Nelson, Sr., who owned and occupied in 1915, and died in 1929. Carl's son, **John Nelson**, owned and occupied the dwelling for more than two decades.

It had been nearly 20 years since C.E. Osborn's store located north of this property closed when, in 1952, John Nelson sold the house to **Frank and Marion Celio** of Wethersfield, CT. Coming from

a long line of grocers, the Celios began renovating the ell of the house with plans to open a grocery store. Two gas pumps were installed in the center of the large driveway. Once "**Frank and Marion's General Store**" opened, the locals quickly embraced the new proprietors and their son, Jimmy, who attended the local school. The store sold fresh meats, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, baked goods, and a large variety of canned goods.

Frank was instrumental, as well as other local men, in helping to organize the W.H.V.F.D. in 1953. During the summer months block dances were held outside on the blacktop driveway of "Frank and Marion's" to benefit the fire department. Bill Osborne and his band, the Hicky Dills played music into the night. Dancing included a few square sets to the delight of those attending.

As a teenager, Sara Lee (Morehouse) Tuinstra worked part-time for Frank and Marion at the store. Waiting on customers, stocking shelves and pumping gas. One Saturday evening Harold and Bertha Groth stopped for gas before heading to the Pleasant Valley Drive-in Theater. She fondly remembers seeing their children curled up in the back seat of the car already for bed, pj's and all – just in case they fell asleep during the movie! (Sara Lee is the granddaughter of the late Carl and Mildred (French) Nelson).

By 1957, the Celios, who would later operate another grocery store in Hebron, CT, had sold this property to **Thomas and Theresa Dakin** of Hartford. The Dakin's two children, Bruce and Jill, also attended the local school.

In addition to the successful grocery business, "General Store," Tom decided to expand the business to include a "snack bar", which offered hot dogs, hamburgers, sandwiches, ice cream sundaes, milkshakes and soft drinks. This new venture was located in a large room at the end of the store building.

Due to declining health, Tom and Tre, as they had become known to all, decided to sell. The property was purchased from them by Ralph L. Porter (approximately 1961-62) and he operated the store for a couple of years.

In 1962, Porter renovated the second floor of the house into a rental apartment for future tenants.

Charles and Rose Celio of Wethersfield, CT (a relative of Frank's) purchased the property through a quick claim deed, dated Feb. 1, 1965. He renovated the "store" area and converted it into an apartment. The tenants, **Phil and Jackie Goba**, moved in and they ran a small convenience store for Mr. Celio for 3 years in the former snack bar area "**Celio's Grocery Store**".

In May, 1963, **Thomas R. Sr. and Elaine LaCasse** rented the second floor apartment. In 1968 they moved to the main floor of the house and eventually purchased the property on October 15, 1982 from Charles Celio. At present, the LaCasse family continues to reside at, what is now, 6 Center Hill Road, West Hartland, CT.

Note: Information obtained from Elaine LaCasse, Sara Lee Tuinstra, Marsha Ransom

Bruce Dakin's General Store Memories 2015

Bruce Dakin's family came to West Hartland from Hartford around 1957. **Thomas and Theresa Dakin** bought the home, store and gas station at the junction of Routes 20 and 181 with hopes of a retirement business. Tom's parents and Bruce's younger sister Jill made up the family of six living there. Bruce began 3rd grade while Mom took care of the store and pumped gas during the day. Tom continued to work full-time at Hartford Special, a machine shop in the city and later at Concrete Products in Avon as a truck fleet mechanic. Most of his earnings went into stock replenishment for the store as well as overhead. The extended family, grandfather, uncles, aunts and cousins helped Tom and Tre build an addition onto the store which became a popular snack bar. It had 6 or 8 stools at the soda fountain counter along with 4 booths and a take-out window. The menu consisted of various sandwiches, pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, fountain sodas and ice cream. Bruce remembers doing chores including restocking shelves, sweeping and ringing the register. He also made sundaes and favorites like root beer floats and cherry colas. Mom and Dad ran the grill and pizza oven. Bruce remembers Kenny Stevens, son of Barbara and Ken and brother to Christina who lived on Riverton Rd. next to the big, red town garage where the orange, state plow trucks were kept. Kenny would help Bruce do some of the larger chores like mowing and snow shoveling. Local teenagers would come in to the snack bar for the burgers and shakes and dance to the jukebox tunes. Bruce remembers his family hosting a block party for the town's 1961 Bi-Centennial celebration. Tom, a volunteer fire truck driver and Tre a member of the women's auxiliary strung lights with help of family and friends around the storefront, pumps and big Flying A gas sign. A large group of folks from town (150 or more) came to dance to the music, eat, drink and enjoy each other's company. High test gas cost an outrageous 28 cents a gallon while regular was 24 cents. Unfortunately, the general store fell on hard times. The townspeople were used to paying (or not) on credit. The Dakins inherited these debts, which Bruce remembers as fairly substantial, from the previous store owners. The demise of the store came when too many of these bills were not paid, forcing the closing of the store and loss of the property. Around 1962 the Dakins property went to Ralph Porter and the family moved to Wilson, a section of Windsor, CT.



Photo of property when owned by Charles & Rose Celio—1965-1982

Phil Goba's General Store Memories 2015

Jackie and I moved into Celio's Store in January 1966, one baby and one on the way. We knew nobody in West Hartland at the time, but it wasn't long until we knew almost everyone. Tom and Elaine Lacasse shared the building with us along with Jerry and Marina Kittredge, we got to be life-long friends.

photo of store and Jackie's sister Janet with the Goba's dog 1966

The winter of 66 was cold and a lot of snow. I had to commute to Hartford for work every day and my wife, Jackie, had to run the store. There was a woodstove next to the apartment door which heated the kitchen and the store. The Water Bureau police, who patrolled the reservoir, would stop in quite often to socialize and warm up. Travelers would stop all hours of the day and night looking for directions, we sold no beer but everyone asked for it.



George Day, dairy farmer down the road (rt. 181) was a big quiet man who said nothing when he came in to buy a paper, not even hello. We soon became good friends and I even worked for him on the dairy farm in New York State. There were some big sugar maple trees growing around the store (which are no longer there). We would tap them for sap and Jackie would boil it down for maple syrup, the store smelled of syrup.

Across the road, looking toward Riverton, the hill was free of trees, deer and fox were seen every day.

As a joke I put up a dummy deer made of cardboard, it was shot by some of the locals, I caught heck about it, but it was funny.

The store sold cigarettes, sandwich meat, milk, bread and dog food. Almost anything you needed. The Irving Treadway Family, up route 181, were great customers, as were Elaine and Tommy and most of the locals in Hartland.



2015 photo of property owned by LaCasse 1982-present



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The Hartland Historical Society's mission is to discover, procure and preserve whatever historical facts may be available relating to the civil, military, literary, cultural, and ecclesiastical history of the town of Hartland; and to investigate and preserve such traditions and knowledge as now exist only in the memory of persons. The Society will be responsible for sponsoring and exhibiting the collection of historical articles, pictures and other items relating to the town.

Hartland Resident
 Postal Customer

Mark Your Calendars

Santa Breakfast December 12, Saturday

8:00-11:00am E.H. Fire House

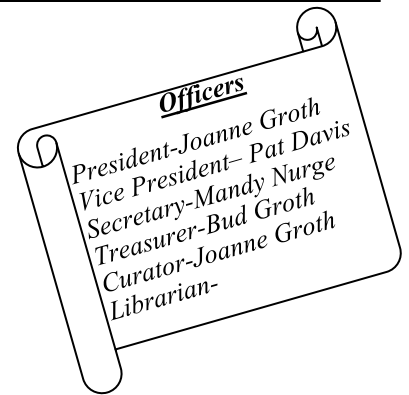
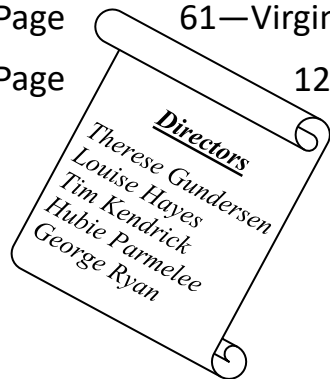
Eat all the pancakes you want. Sausages, coffee and juice will also be served. Of course, Santa himself will also be there waiting to listen to children's holiday requests and pose for pictures.

Hartland Remembers Book - Please make these corrections to your copy of "Hartland Remembers"

Page 26—3rd paragraph—\$600,000 **not** \$6,000,000

Page 61—Virginia's bio age 92 **not** 88

Page 122—Don's bio 2001 **not** 2000



LOOK INSIDE....

- ◆ Memories and photos of house on the corner of Rt. 20 & 181
- ◆ Historical instruments presentation at the 26th Blueberry Picnic