



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 2017

Join us at our Fall Membership Meeting and Presentation

Members and Non-members Welcome!!

Sunday, October 1st, 2PM at the W.H. Library Hall

Leaving Connecticut, Shaping America

By State Historian Professor Woodward

Between 1780 and 1830, tens of thousands of Connecticutans left our state to "begin the world anew" in places like Pennsylvania, Vermont, western New York, and especially, the Connecticut Reserve of what is now Ohio (**many Hartland residents went to Ohio during this time**). In the process, they took the culture of their home state with them, and gave the nation a strong and indelible Connecticut character.

In this fast-paced and copiously illustrated talk, Walt Woodward discusses the reasons behind Connecticut's massive outmigration, the distinctive attributes of the people who chose to leave, and the very serious concerns their removal raised for those they left behind.

Meeting and presentation followed by cider, coffee and Mrs. Murphy donuts!



The following pages is the second part of the *Personal Reminiscences by Lester Taylor, 1874*.

Lester is just one of the many who "left Hartland, CT and was part of shaping America"

The Gaylord House Museum is open the first Sunday of each month, May-October, 2-4PM.

Interested in visiting—have family or friends visiting? Make an appointment:

hartlandhistoricalsociety@gmail.com or text 860-309-8016.

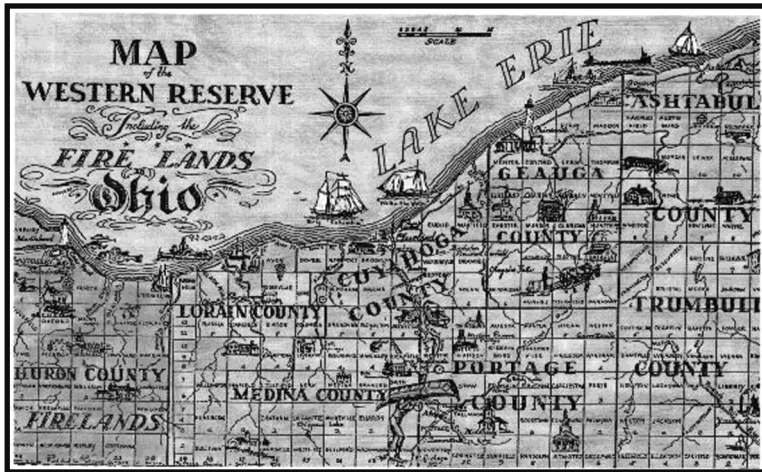
PERSONAL REMINISCENCES BY LESTER TAYLOR 1874 Part 2—Ohio

Original transcript provided by William J. Hyde, descendant of the Hartland Wilder family. Minimal editing was done.

I therefore bequeath this Testament of facts imperfect as it may be to the care of those who may have a taste for pre-historic family record or appreciate the labors of one desires to fulfill the scripture injunction “to do good and communicate and forget not.” I therefore Lester Taylor of Claridon *Geauga County and State of Ohio in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy four of lawful age being now seventy five years of age having been born in Hartland Hartford County State of Connecticut on the fifth of August seventeen hundred & ninety eight.

An autobiographical account will not be attempted: only a few sketches of life and such reminiscences, of changes and progress personally known or made cognizant of by indisputable testimony within the two generations of my memory. Was raised in one of those rough-stony-rocky-hilly-sterile Towns of N England where abounds a pure bracing atmosphere, spring and brooks of purest water; an intelligent-industrious and economical people of very pure morals and affording good facilities for common school education and religious instruction after the Puritan order.

I remained in Connecticut until I was twenty; teaching school in the winter & working on the farm summers. On the first day of March 1819 I left my native State for Ohio. I had just closed my winter’s school. I left in company with two young men of my acquaintance in a sleigh loaded with a few chests of Tea and twenty eight dozen of Scythes and came to Ohio in the sleigh. March was a very cold month. On arriving in the Genesee County were told there was no sleighing by way of Buffalo. We changed our course crossing the Genesee River at Genesco and came out on to Lake Erie road north of Erie Pa. a short distance. There near the Lake shore from thence to *Hartford Trumbull Co Ohio by way of Meadville but little snow and poor sleighing until we were near Erie had plenty of snow. We were twenty three days on the road. Had friends in Hartford & Vernon (Ohio), spent a week in visiting and then came to my brothers in Claridon (Ohio - then called Burlington). Commenced work on the farm I now live on (1874) on the fifth of April 1819 working part of the time on my land and a part of the time to pay for my board. Cleared a few acres & sowed some wheat. Taught school four months in the winter in Mentor; was sick with the ague and fever most of next summer.



In the fall of 1820 I left for Connecticut on horseback. The reason of my returning to Connecticut was that I had agreed with a young Lady in my native Town with whom I had long been acquainted or rather we had mutually agreed to be married. Went to Hartford & Vernon Trumbull County Ohio to visit Friends, found a Mr. Hall in Vernon going to Massachusetts horseback: waited one day to obtain his company, passed through Meadville PA, stayed all night at a log cabin with a Titus family near a creek, where, by the best information I can obtain is now Titusville PA, at the renowned oil region. Hall having business a day’s journey in an eastern or north eastern direction. We passed a miserable barren wild cat & panther country with steep gullies and deep-dark gloomy valleys. At one time descending a long-steep dug road which seemed interminable Hall being ahead & sung out horridly stop! Drawing rein, turning his head quickly why: what for: was told instances often occurred in descending deep wells of loss of life by poisonous gas – as a

precaution lighted candles were often taken, if the flame was extinguished for want of sufficient oxygen, animal life could not be sustained; had we not better adopt some such expedient before descending any further; a laugh helped dispel the gloom. Soon reached a creek without suffering for want of vital air: Visited in the country as I passed along with friends and returned in safety. I parted company with Hall before reaching Buffalo. Hall was very good company – a devout Methodist class leader – who by means somehow obtained information at the close of every day's journey of the whereabouts of a brother class leader and enjoyed his hospitalities – it made him irregular and late to join me at the tavern for our days travel, so I put ahead one morning alone and was not overtaken. In passing Cayuga Lake NY I saw a Steam Boat, the first I had ever seen.

Taught school in the winter of 1820-21 in my native town. Was married on the second day of May 1821 by Rev'd Nathaniel Gaylord to Miss Mary L Wilder daughter of Col. Eli Wilder of the same town. We left for Ohio in May, in a covered wagon with two horses containing a good setting out for those times, in goods and furniture for the necessary and convenience of housekeeping life. Visited friends and relations in Cherry Valley, Bristol Ontario County and Buffalo. Arrived at our home in Geauga County, Claridon Ohio where I had previously put up a log cabin.

Having a little experience in a new country life, the transition from an old country to a new, from a large well-furnished house and a numerous household – from fashionable society to a log cabin in the woods – alone during days – the course dress and back woods society was to her sudden; yet she conformed readily to the change. I was frequently from home in the evening and sometimes during the night. Wolves howling about the forest, bears came into my cornfield, yet she was not tiresome – discouraged – nor homesick: she had discretion and fortitude. Industrious and economical amidst discouragements & trials hope and courage never forsook her.

In March 1827 our log house was burned I had gone to Painesville with an ox team and load of produce it took fire in the day time on the roof it being a very dry windy day the flames spread so rapidly but very little was saved. My wives sister Miss Lucy Wilder was here on a visit. The fire was discovered by some coals dropping through the loose floor overhead Miss Wilder run for neighbors, my wife saved some things – took care of our little boy then about three years old. Very little saved, there was nothing left for us to eat and nothing to eat with. It was evening when I returned home – drove the team near where the house had stood, discovered some burning brands and no house. It was a great shock: found some relief when I got to my brothers and found my family alive and well. It was at least a great loss. The neighbors were kind and sympathetic – but had only log house furniture – that is just enough for necessary use and no money. The loss for many years was irreparable and deeply felt. None but those who have experienced such a loss can know. We continued to work with hope and courage expecting to see better times; and did.

On the first day of March 1830 our little boy Robert DeWit then nearly six years old was killed. He had the Sabbath been to meeting and Sabbath school and drew a book which told about a Shepherds calling. He went into the woods where my cattle were browsing the tree tops I had fallen – he got a stick said he was a going to be a shepherd and take care of the cattle. I had cut several trees in a row partly down – then cut one which I expected would strike the next partly cut and so on sweeping down the whole row a common way of what we called slashing timber. The tree I started as a breaker struck the second tree bent it over considerable slipped off from the top when the bent tree sprang back with such force as to break and fall directly in a different way from what I expected. The fatal top just reached him – breaking his skull with a limb not larger than my fingers. He was unconscious- a few short breaths – without a struggle or sign of pain – he was dead. It was a sad occurrence. Under the circumstances very trying. Mary L. was born in one month from the day he was killed.

In 1831 we united with the Congregational Church in Claridon under the care of Revd. Mr. Tracy at the Rufus Hurlburt barn at the center of the Township now owned by Mrs. Elmer south side of the road owned by Lester Treats or his residence. *Majority of first members of this church were from Hartland, CT—see photo-church dedicated in 1832*

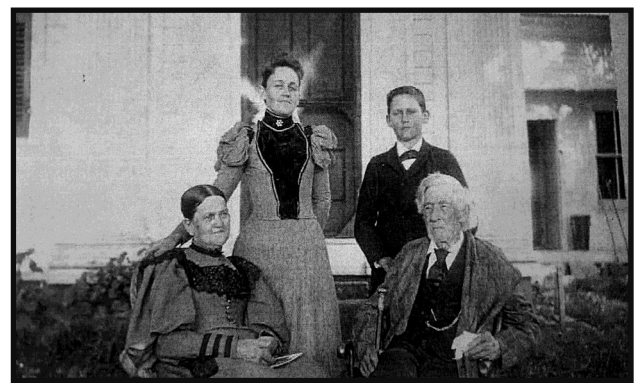


As I intended to show prominent changes in domestic household business brought about by manufacturing establishments and consequently changes of political opinions & parties I find myself inadvertently being drawn into political history which was not my intention.

I will only add that the Democrats in State and National conventions oppose protection for American industry (unless incidental and favor it only for necessary revenue) The Democrats in State and National conventions passed resolutions endorsing the old Federal doctrines in as strong terms and more treasonable language than the resolutions passed by the famous Hartford Convention. I remember when Alexander Hamilton after his death was held up as an imperious old Federalist – a monarchist in sentiment whose financial operations tended to fill the pockets of the rich from the hard earning of the poor, denounced with all the contumely and bitter aperitifs which irritated party feelings could invent – now crowned a Martyr – our statesman and every fourth of July orator vying with each other in eulogizing his memory – his exalted character – patriotism – purity of purpose – preeminent statesman and as financier unsurpassed. Verily nonpolitically; as of old when the scribes and Pharisees garnished the sepulchers of the Fathers and Prophets whom they had slain.

For fifty five years I have lived in Claridon cleared up my farm set out fruit and ornamental trees put up good buildings helped raise up and provide for a numerous family of children all of whom hope through the Grace of God to be made partakers of the blessings purchased by Christ Jesus their Lord and Savior. My wife Mary L Wilder Taylor died fifth day of May 1870. We had lived together forty-nine years and three days her industry – economy and good judgement did much for my own benefit and towards bringing up our family and her piety and good examples and precepts towards leading them to a Christian Life. Revd. E D Taylor the Pastor of the Congregation Church preached the funeral Sermon from Proverbs 25th verse of the last chapter “Strength and honor are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come.” The text and mostly the whole chapter was read and is a very good commentary on her life.

I do not propose to say much of myself – it may be gratifying to some hereafter to know that amidst the toils and labors of clear up a new farm and the cares of family without much means to begin with I found time to read (mostly evenings) and cultivate my mind by conversation, treasuring up a little here and there, words of wisdom and sentiments worthy of reflections – by observation in endeavoring and disciplining my mind to a thoughtful consideration of the works of nature and Providence as interpreters of revelation and of the wisdom and power of Omnipotence. A thinking and logical mind with industrious habits of application and a well-trained tenacious memory may become quite an encyclopedia of knowledge. That I have enjoyed in a good degree the confidence of those with whom I was associated in public business and where I was known personally or by reputation may be reasonably inferred from the various official duties conferred upon me by the people and the legislature. I have been Col. Commandant of a regt. holding nearly all the subordinate offices in the line below that. Nearly every Township Office and the most important ones repeatedly – was elected and reelected Justice of the Peace and resigned to accept a higher judicial office. Was appointed by the legislature in 1830



Sitting: Lucy Taylor Goodwin & Lester Taylor

as one of the Commissioners for the appraisal for sale of about 60000 acres of the Western Reserve lands situated mostly in Tuscarawas and Holmes Counties the avails of which were funded the interest of which goes for the benefit of common schools now and forever. In 1833 was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Ohio. Again for the sessions of 1835 & 6. Was after that Elected one of the associate Judges of Geauga County which I held until the adoption of the new State Constitution. Was Elected to General Assembly for the sessions of 1853 and 4. Elected State Senator for the sessions of 1855 and 6 and 1857 and 8. During those sessions the Lieut. Governor Ford was absent most of the time I was Elected by the senate Pres't Pro Tem and discharged the duties of Presiding Officer. Was chosen Moderator of the Plymouth Rock Conference of Congregational Churches for some 20 years -was chosen Delegate to represent the churches in the great National Council at Boston of Congregational Churches in U.S.A. with many brethren of the same denomination from Foreign Countries.

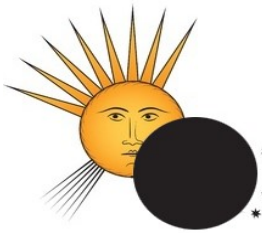
In all my official duties I labored to protect the rights – liberties and lives of my fellow citizens – to promote their happiness and general welfare and develop their educational and pecuniary resources and that of the country – have often accepted invitations to Lecture on Agricultural – Temperance and miscellaneous subjects – cannot adopt fully the language of Solomon “Vanity of Vanities all is vanity, for in my efforts to do good I trust and hope all has not been unavailing. Lester Taylor died April 29, 1899.

Notes from Wikipedia:

After the discovery of the [New World](#), the land that became Geauga County was originally part of the French colony of [Canada \(New France\)](#), which was ceded in 1763 to [Great Britain](#) and renamed [Province of Quebec](#). In the late 18th century the land became part of the [Connecticut Western Reserve](#) in the [Northwest Territory](#), and then was purchased by the [Connecticut Land Company](#) in 1795. Geauga County was founded on March 1, 1806 as the second county in the Connecticut Western Reserve, originating from [Trumbull County, Ohio](#).

*Trumbull County is [named](#) for [Jonathan Trumbull](#), [Governor](#) of [Connecticut](#), who once owned the land in this region.

*Hartford, Trumbull County is named after Hartford, Connecticut.



* **This year we had a solar eclipse on August 21. We did not see the total eclipse here in Hartland but Lester Taylor did in 1806!!!**

A total solar eclipse occurred on June 16, 1806. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between Earth and the Sun, thereby totally or partly obscuring the image of the Sun for a viewer on Earth. A total solar eclipse occurs when the Moon's apparent diameter is larger than the Sun's, blocking all direct sunlight, turning day into darkness.

Here is what Lester Taylor wrote:

“In June 1806 then eight years old I witnessed the total eclipse of the sun-was with my father and others hoeing corn about a mile from home-the stars appeared and shone brilliantly-the dew fell copiously-some of the men were destitute of their body-linen was so wet with dew one remarked he must work or he should take cold-another said he would not work if he did take cold -there would not be another eclipse total in New England for more than a hundred years-the fowls went to roost-the air was clear-could hear dogs bark in various directions and seemly at a great distance when it began to dawn the cocks crow in every direction with great fervor and distinctness-the birds sang merrily-merrily-joy and gladness seemed to pervade the whole animal kingdom.”



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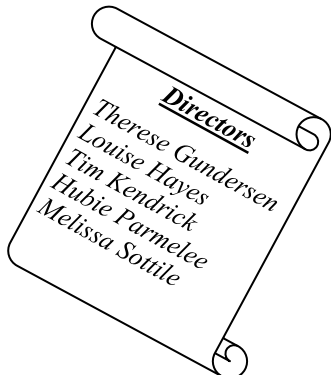
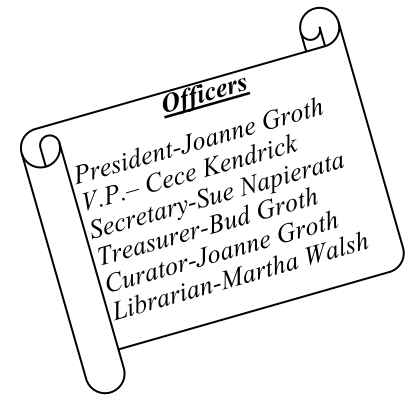
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The Hartland Historical Society's mission is to discover, procure and preserve whatever historical facts may be available relating to the civil, military, literary, cultural, and ecclesiastical history of the town of Hartland; and to investigate and 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

In This Issue

- ◆ **Prof. W. Woodward** presentation “Leaving Connecticut, Shaping America” Sunday, Oct. 1st membership fall meeting/speaker, W.H. Library, 2PM. (see front page)
- ◆ **Lester Taylor** born in Hartland in the year 1798 took to his pen in 1874. Herein are his reminiscences of Ohio.
- ◆ **Lester Taylor’s** account of the June 1806 total eclipse
- ◆ **AmazonSmile** Add on support for HHS.



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Mark your 2017 Calendars

- ◆ Fall Meeting October 1
- ◆ Santa Breakfast December 9
 E.H. Fire House, 8—11:00 AM
 Santa Visits, Pancake Breakfast,
 and Santa Gift Shop