



The Chronicler

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

Mail to: P.O. Box 221, East Hartland, CT 06027—hartlandhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

HartlandHistoricalSociety.com

Spring Edition 2017

HHS membership meeting followed by Tales and Fables!

Hubie Parmelee, a life long resident and descendent of the town's first permanent settler, will be our guest speaker.

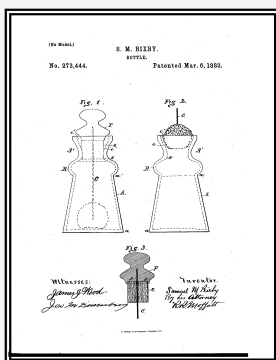
Everyone welcome!

Come hear Hartland historical memories and antidotes!

Friday, May 19th, 7PM at the Town Hall

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Since 1989, when the Historical Society first received 2 glass bottles, it was believed they were old ink bottles. The bottles were Hartland owned and donated. They had been displayed with our Postal desk since the opening of the Museum that same year and labeled as such.



In 2016 our curator, Joanne Groth, while working on inventorying, noticed the bottles markings "pattened Mch.6.83, BIXBY". Researching the "ink" bottles, to add info to the label, proved eye opening. These are not ink bottles but are shoe blacking/polish bottles! The patent date relates to the design of the blacking applicator (*left photo*) making the bottles we have (*right photo*) date from that time to late 1880's.



A little history: Samuel Merrill Bixby, along with a partner, operated a shoe store in New York for a period of time, and by approximately 1860, he was manufacturing and selling shoe blacking. By 1865, he sold the store and went full steam ahead with his own line of shoe blacking. He eventually formed S. M. Bixby and Company, gradually expanding a line of dye-related products, concentrating on shoe blacking and ink. S. M. Bixby became a part of the F.F. Dailey Corporation in 1920, and Bixby brand products were continued to be sold for several years afterward.

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 1—Hartland

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 prehistoric family record or appreciate the labors of one desiring 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 and 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 New 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 am now writing about the times 1808 to 1820. The farming utensils were very primitive consisting of an oxcart and sled - wooden plow with a wrought iron share fastened on the point or nose of the wood work by an iron bolt which required to be taken off & carried to the black smith frequently to be sharpened by fire and hammer - axe - hoe with an eye at the upper end of the plate to receive the handle - a flail to thrash the rye - a brake to prepare the flax for dressing - an upright board fastened into a moveable block and a long wooden knife (about two feet in length to dress their flax - a large grain fan [pan?] holding about a



peck with two handles to shake and fling it into the air for the wind to blow off the chaff - an expert would clean up a grist say two bushels in the course of an hour which was generally carried to mill on horseback - a hand rake - pitch forks made by common blacksmiths and a scythe. *Photo above of tools at the Gaylord House Museum-plow, axe, scythe, pitchforks, flail.*

The children were sent to school three months in summer - until about ten or twelve years old - continued in the winter terms until sixteen or eighteen years of age. At such an age the best scholars would teach school - young men in the winter - young Ladies in the summer. Other young men worked threshing out their rye - getting up - and chopping their summer wood and if (and it was very common in New England) a sun shining day with a crisp bracing atmosphere: one might reasonably expect the business of farmers and their sons to be a breaking and swindling of flax preparatory for the women's spinning. The girls or young Ladies perhaps I ought to say engaged in winter - and spring in spinning flax - weaving it into cloth, whitening it by dipping the cloth into water and ashes lye and spreading on the ground to dry and making up the linen clothing for family & bedding - then the great spinning wheels were brought into use for wool. When there were more boys and girls than were wanted on the farm or in the house it was no disparagement from the most reputable families to work out - young men from twelve to fifteen dollars per month and girls a dollar per week ordinary business. Industry, economy - stability with good moral character were good criterions to judge of their fitness to become good husbands & fathers wives and mothers. Indeed the number and magnitude of the bunches of yarn - the amount woven - good cooking and clean sanded floors; the large parlor chimney places filled with bushes of green leaves were the best of recommendations to sensible young men and for the consent of their Parents.

Their living was plain and substantial, their health's good - countenance's fair and rugged - their movements quick and elastic - with good hale strong constitutions. It was in such a place and amongst such a people that my wife and I were brought up. Our testimony has always been it was a good place and amongst a very good people. Senator Douglas has said that New England was a good place to raise children and train youth and then, the quicker they got out of it the better. I could endorse the sentiment with some limitation to many subjects better, than to its primary political meaning and intent.

I remained in CT 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. *cont..Ohio reminiscences will be published in the Fall Chronicler*

In the fall of 1820 I left Ohio for CT on horseback. The reason of my returning to CT 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** 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 where abouts 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 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. Our wedding day was on one of the CT festival days called Election Day being the day of the meeting of the Legislature & the inauguration of the Governor elect. When old folks visited – middle aged & young men played ball & in the evening balls and parties were fashionable. I was then twenty two and my wife twenty being two years and two days younger than myself.

Our parents (Childs Taylor, Sr. & Rhoda Bates) (Col. Eli Wilder & Mary Johnson) were among the most respectable families in Town in fair circumstances for those times. Our Fathers had both of them been several times members of the CT General Assembly and enjoyed the confidence of the community. We had the usual advantages of a common school education such as they were in those days, my wife having the advantage of three months schooling in a select school in the City of Hartford. Our Newspaper reading was only a weekly political paper. There were only two weekly papers circulated in that Town being the "CT Courant" and "Hartford Mercury" of different political principles and taken only by such as approved of their political creed being either Federalist or Democratic. Our education, limited and defective as it was, we had no Peers of our age in Town. We had the advantage of a good Library in Town which was of great advantage to me being fond of reading.

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. *cont..Ohio reminiscences will be published in the Fall Chronicler.*

I will notice some striking changes within my own knowledge. When a little boy, there were a number of neighboring women came to our house a visiting one P.M. bringing some wool and hand cards - were carding rolls for spinning: one of the women said she had heard that there was a carding machine running by water - the wool being put into the machine the rolls would come out about as fast as one could count. I remember their verdict was "their wool should never go into such a machine – the cards would tear the wool so much that it would be worthless. In 1874 young people need to go to some historical rooms of museums to see relics of the past such as hand cards and spinning wheels.



Photo of spinning wheels at the Gaylord House Museum

In 1812 there was machinery in Providence RI to spin cotton and much yarn was spun there. Merchants in Hartford CT kept the yarn to let out to be wove into cloth at a given price per yard. Many women in Hartland 30 miles in the country from the city of Hartford kept their looms a running sending back their cloth and getting new supplies of yarn. It was a great help to some poor people to weave cotton yarn for the support of their families during the war of 1812. It was called "Providence yarn." There was an improvement made in common looms during the war so that the Lathe which springs the thread up to and makes the cloth when swung back sent the shuttle the yarn of the warp by means of strings attached to the Lathe without being touched by the hand. It was then thought a wonderful improvement & indeed it was from the stand point of 1812. I am unable to state the price paid for weaving cotton cloth at that time – or the price of cloth which I regret. Would not the account Books of some country merchant of those times be entertaining and instructive now in 1874.

When I was a young man and taught school I had to set copies for all those that were learning to write – make and mend their pens (goose quills) – show every scholar in Arithmetic how to do their sums – hear their recitations in Geography and Grammar – had to write as many as 20 copies in their writing books a day – not an atlas in any common school in the Town where I was raised – had generally some 30 or 40 scholars a day- in one school average 50, had 40 different scholars: now in many schools no writing, if any: printed copies – steel pens – a black board – school classified so that examples in arithmetic can be done for the class instead of every one separately – schools averaging 15 or 20 good atlases for study of Geography – and teachers complain they have so much to do and receiving from \$25 to 35 per month.

In writing there has been a falling off from good to bad: in all other branches I do not candidly think, there has been a corresponding increase of learning to the facilities and expense incurred. Are now their capabilities less. When I was young; brought up to go to meeting in a large Meeting house all through the long winters – two long sermons a day, on a cold mountain without any fire & less complaint about cold, than now with warm comfortable houses. Are now their physical constitution less vigorous? Standing would not work if he did take cold there would not be another Eclipse Total in New England for more than an 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 crew in every direction with great fever and distinctness – the birds sang merrily-merrily: joy and gladness seemed to pervade the whole animal kingdom fifty years after-wards whilst in CT I stood on the place and in 68 years from the eclipse again there: and so vivid were my impressions during and especially at the close of Eclipse and the revival of day, that I fancied I could by shutting my eyes – so all was dark and still, hear the roosters crowing and birds singing as at the time. It was the resurrection of the natural Sun sunk in obscurity at near mid-day.

The cold Friday so memorable in the annals of severe weather remembered now by only a few. The day previous had been warm towards night the wind veered to the N West – rose rapidly until it became a furious hurricane – a tempest whose velocity and force was appalling and the intensity of cold unequaled in N England where I lived. The house where I slept – trembled – shook and rocked according as the gusts were more or less violent. The sound of the hardest gusts were like the rushing pressure of steam from the opening valve of a high pressure Steam Boat Engine. As the day began to dawn a man who had slept or rather lay in the chamber realized more the awful shaking and rocking, was up to see what had been done and be better prepared for emergencies came to the door where my brother Childs & I slept saying your horse barn or shed is unroofed – our neighbor Mr. Beach's barn – the roof is all gone; soon we were out in the kitchen – as the day opened what desolation – acres of timber prostrated in every direction – many persons froze their hands – face and ears in attempting to reach their barns – and back to their houses for extra protection. Two young men of my neighbors slept in a chamber that was not done off – one of the hardest gusts of wind raised one side of the roof of the house so they declared they could jump out over the plate and under the roof before it settled back, they did not wait for a second monition whilst the roof seemed to balance on a pivot they rushed down stairs as fast as their locomotives could carry them by leaps and jumps. Soon after they had rods of iron so cut and bent as to drive into the rafters and plate of the house so as to prevent their separation.

Footnotes from Wikipedia:

*Geauga County was founded on March 1, 1806 as the second county in the CT Western Reserve, originating from Trumbull County, Ohio.

*Trumbull County is named for Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of CT, who once owned the land in this region.

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

What's new at the Museum? Come and See!

The Museum has had in its possession, among other church artifacts, a military stainless steel communion set marked "U.S." This set was used by Rev. Charles Stipek, who served in the Army Air Forces 1943-1946. In 1945 he was in Wiesbaden, Germany as acting station chaplain. Wiesbaden Air Base was headquarters for all American Air Forces in Europe. We also have a flag that was given to Stipek that flew at Imo Jima. The Rev. lived in West Hartland with his wife Nelda and served the Church and Hartland Historical Society greatly. It has been a desire for years to display these artifacts with respect for our military and church. It was decided a wall cabinet would be a good solution, preferably one made by a skilled Hartland resident.

Now what we needed was a carpenter. Tom Ransom was suggested at one of our meetings. A phone call and meeting in 2016 led to his donation of skill, time and materials. Our new handmade cabinet is made from an East Hartland ash tree felled, then milled by Brian Watkins of East Hartland. Tom customized the cabinet to meet the criteria to display the communion set and other items beautifully. Tom also worked on the customized cabinets in the museum's office in the 1980's. Thank you Tom for your continued support and craftsmanship! Thank you Laurie, his wife, for doing the stain and varnish work!



Amazon Shoppers take note!! HHS is registered to receive donations! Please consider when you are online shopping with Amazon!

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

You log into the site at smile.amazon.com just as you would to your regular Amazon account. Once you are logged in, underneath the search bar, you will see "Supporting" and you click on that to search for the organization you wish to support, in this case, Hartland Historical Society, Inc. After choosing HHS, continue to place your order. When your order is complete it will let you know that a donation has been made. They keep a running total of what your donations have been.

Santa Breakfast is always a busy, fun and cheerful time.

Thanks to all our students and boy scouts who helped out the day of the event. Sorry if we missed your name.

Julia Hackett, Lexie Hart, Olivia Prusak, Bob Nichols, Jayden Robotham, Tyler Fairchild, Abby Bennett, Abby Jabs, Beverly Hall, Shyanne Hall, Cate Bedard, Jordan Hackett, Porter Ouellette, Emma Abrahamsen, Kevin Harnois, Matthew Ferro, Anna Jabs, Maya Frenette, Haiden Martocchio, Liam Murphy, Hannah Murphy.



Thank you to all our volunteers who give of their time before, during and after this event. You know who you are! Here is a photo of some of us there that day.

Sitting: Mandy Nurge, Megan Lindgren, Santa and Josephine Yanchak. Standing: Joanne Groth, Monica Cegelka, Tim Kendrick, Cece Kendrick, Lynn Osborn, Ada May Parmelee, Judith Palinkas and Chuck Osborn





PO Box 221
 East Hartland, CT
 06027

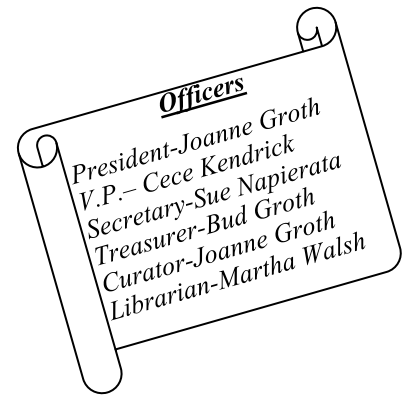
NONPROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE PAID
 WINSTED CT
 PERMIT NO 11

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

- ◆ **Lester Taylor** born in Hartland in the year 1798 took to his pen in 1874. Herein are his remembrances of Hartland.
- ◆ **What's new** at the Gaylord House Museum?
- ◆ **Hubie Parmelee**, upcoming Friday, May 19th spring meeting speaker, Town Hall, 7PM.
- ◆ **Membership and Donation** Envelope



- ◆ **AmazonSmile Details.** Add on support for HHS. Choose us the next time you shop online!



Mark your 2017 Calendars

- ◆ Spring Meeting May 19
- ◆ House Tour June 4
- ◆ Carnival Booth July 26-29
- ◆ Blueberry Picnic August 13
- ◆ Fall Meeting October 8
- ◆ Santa Breakfast December 9