



The Chronicler

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

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HartlandHistoricalSociety.com

Spring Edition 2019

Spring Membership Meeting and Presentation

Friday, May 17th, 7PM at the Town Hall

All Invited!

The Connecticut 169 Club: Your Passport and Guide to Exploring Connecticut

By Martin Podskoch

From our town of Hartland Connecticut to the quaint splendor of Kent in the northwest hills to the great restaurants that dot the shoreline of Westbrook to New Britain's industrial roots, travel and history author Martin "Marty" Podskoch has published *Connecticut 169 Club: Your Passport and Guide to Exploring Connecticut*. For this book he recruited writers, historians, and officials from each town and asked them to write a short description about their town's history, interesting places to visit, and good places to eat in the hopes of encouraging people to visit them all. Come hear more!

Refreshments and the \$24.95 book will be available along with Podskoch and some of the writers of the book for a book signing.

The reward for visiting all 169 CT towns, cities and villages will be a "**Leatherman patch**" which commemorates a legendary vagabond.

Who was the Leatherman

Article from the Country Journal, Manchester Center, VT – date unknown.

"Perhaps you remember the Leatherman. Back in 1974 we introduced the mysterious wanderer in the pages of our first Christmas issue. For thirty years, from 1859 until 1889, he trudged along the roads of western Connecticut and eastern New York, averaging ten miles a day – always clockwise along the same 365 mile route, always keeping precisely to a schedule that brought him through each town on his circuit once every thirty-four days. Cont. next page..

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 call or text 860-309-8016.

Townpeople eagerly looked forward to the reappearance of the Leatherman, who arrived at a few select homes where he was sure of a hot meal or a bundle of food for the road. He never spoke, never ventured inside; he merely pounded loudly on the back door and gestured with his hands that he was ready to eat. Then he sat quietly on the kitchen steps or under a tree, ate his meal, and moved on. (One household listed his lunch-time menu: a large bowl of stew, two cans of sardines, a loaf of bread, a pound of crackers, a gill of brandy, and a bottle of beer.)

The Leatherman spent his nights in thirty-four small caves in the area (still known today as



Leatherman Caves). In the spring of 1889, hunters discovered his frozen body in a cave on the George Dell farm in Mount Pleasant, near Ossining, New York. The brutal winter had been too much for the harmless itinerant.

His suit, fashioned from discarded pieces of leather, was found to weigh sixty pounds—after the many hidden pockets were emptied of food, small tools, an awl, jackknife, matches, tobacco, a tin pan, and an assortment of leather scraps. His wooden-soled boots alone weighed ten pounds. Stripped of his garments, the beloved Leatherman was buried in the paupers' section of the nearby Spartan Cemetery.

The Editors thank Estella Woodruff for sending along this photograph. Her grandparents were among those who awaited the hungry visitor every thirty-four days and recalled leaving parcels of food outside the kitchen

door in anticipation of his arrival."

THE (SOMETIMES PECULIAR) JESSE GATES FAMILY OF HARTLAND CT

By Sandra Everett, the 4th great-granddaughter of Theophilus Lord and Dorothy Ransom Gates. Phoenix, AZ. 2017

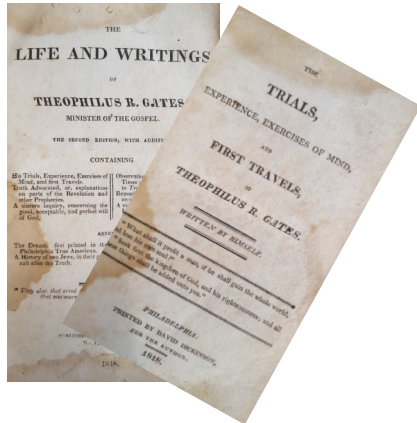
Records show that there were a number of families with the Gates surname in Connecticut in the eighteenth century, but the Jesse Gates family arrived in Hartland from East Haddam around 1768 when Jesse and Elizabeth Lord Gates bought a farm there, using the proceeds from the sale of their land in Lyme to purchase the Hartland property. Jesse was the son of Daniel Gates and his wife Lydia Fuller, who was descended from the Edward Fuller family, the John Tilley family, and John Howland, all Mayflower passengers. Elizabeth had given birth to five children before the move and five more children were born in Hartland. Jesse saw active service in the Revolutionary War for two months in the fall of 1776 when he served in Captain James Morgan's Company in the 8th Regiment of Militia from the State of Connecticut commanded by Oliver Smith. At the time he would have been 42 years old with several children still at home.

Theophilus Lord Gates was Jesse and Elizabeth's first-born son and was described as always being somewhat frail. He married his first cousin, Dorothy (Dolly) Ransom, and they had a family of nine children, seven of whom reached adulthood. Theophilus inherited land from his father and he and Dolly were given additional land by their mutual grandfather. The children were all well-educated and all taught school at one time or another. Apparently as he aged Theophilus experienced 'mental vagrancy' and became more and more erratic.

Two of their children died before the age of five and all of their other children, with the exception of one son, moved to Trumbull County or Portage County in the Western Reserve of Ohio in the decade after 1810. In 1822 son-in-law Solomon Payne went back to Armenia, NY where he met his mother-in-law Dolly and took her to Ohio by wagon to 'visit' her daughters. The oldest daughter, Lydia, and her husband Roger Eno traveled back to Hartland for a short time to see to the farm. Dolly was still 'visiting' in Ohio eight years later when Theophilus passed away. In the intervening years he had been in trouble with his church for his use of 'ardent spirits' and his 'contempt of the church', was unrepentant, and was excommunicated on 17 Nov, 1828. It is unclear if he was readmitted to the church but the church did record his death in 1830. Cont. next page..

The son who did not join the exodus to Ohio, Theophilus Ransom Gates, born in 1787, inherited the unconventional behavior of his father, but took it to a more extreme level. His biographer, Charles Coleman Sellers, put it this way in his book *Theophilus the Battle-Axe* --

- “There was in his nature a certain unhappy restlessness; something seemed lacking for which he must seek, and the cares of the world troubled him. Much of his morbid melancholy may be traced to physical ills, from which he was never free. In him the inheritance from Theophilus Lord Gates took the form of an emotional intensity, a vague underlying sense of some great destiny, an imaginative faith in inspiration that was to flower in the grandiose delusion of a new social order coming upon the world, and himself as its prophet, by divine command.”



Theophilus Ransom Gates taught school for a few years beginning at age 16 and then became an itinerant preacher on his way to becoming infamous. He eventually ended up in the Philadelphia area, where, at the young age of 29 he wrote an autobiographical book titled *The Trials, Experiences, Exercises of Mind and First Travels of Theophilus R. Gates*. He revolted against organized religion and with his publication of a tract titled *Battle-Axe*, he gained followers in what became a sort of cult called Battle-Axes who rejected most of conventional Christian theology, marriage, and the clergy and believed, among many other things, in free love. A Battle-Axe commune was established north of Philadelphia in North Coventry Township, Chester County, that continued for a few years past Theophilus' death in 1846, although it is not clear that he himself ever actually lived in

the commune. His followers shocked the local community by their frequent skinny-dipping and at one point were said to have run naked up and down the aisles of a local church during weekly services. Needless to say, the local authorities were not amused and cult members frequently faced legal action.

The Gates children who migrated to Ohio all established families there with the exception of Sarah who lived with her sister Polly in Payne's Corners, Ohio. Trumbull County is just across the state line from Mercer County, PA, and a family of Scottish immigrants, the Hendersons, established a village in Mercer County in the early 1800's. Around 1817 or 1818 Hendersonville needed a new school teacher, and from a traveling missionary they learned that there was a school teacher at Payne's Corners. On horseback and leading a second horse, the oldest son in the family, William Henderson, made his way forty-two miles to Payne's Corners to find this teacher. Sarah agreed to accept the position and the two set off back to Hendersonville.

Sarah was noted for her penmanship and it was said that with ink and a quill pen she could write the Lord's Prayer in a circle about the size of today's fifty cent piece. It wasn't long before she caught the eye of William's youngest brother, Archibald, and the two married in September of 1820 and started a family of their own, raising two boys and a girl. They sent their boys to Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia and both returned to Mercer County to establish practices. Unfortunately the doctors passed away at young ages, William at 30 and Charles at 36. Their daughter Mary Ann lost her only children much too soon as well, her son at 17 and her daughter at 28, but as a widow, known to the family as Granny Hamilton, she raised her two grandchildren on her own and lived to the age of 75, dying just three years before the turn of the twentieth century.

Jesse Gates (1734-1817) and presumably Elizabeth (1739-1819) are buried in East Hartland Cemetery, along with Theophilus Lord and Dolly Gates' two children. Theophilus Lord Gates must be buried somewhere in the Hartland area, but the location is unknown. Dolly lived to the age of 97 and is buried at Payne's Corners and, except for Sarah, her other four daughters and her son Daniel Washington Gates lie in various cemeteries in the Western Reserve lands bordering Pennsylvania. Theophilus Ransom Gates is buried near Philadelphia in Chester County, Pennsylvania, far from any of his family. Archibald and Sarah Gates Henderson gave a portion of their land for Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church and Cemetery and are buried there alongside Mary Ann, her husband John Hamilton, and the two Hamilton children. The church is gone, but the cemetery is still there and is maintained by local residents.

The Gaylord House Museum houses copies of the above mentioned books.

Santa Breakfast Has Come to Town by Monica Cegelka

In Hartland, CT, if the event of the summer is The Fireman's Carnival, then the event of the winter is The Santa Breakfast. This year's (2018) feast did not disappoint. Several of Santa's elves showed up to serve piping hot pancakes with real maple syrup made by 3 of our own, along with golden brown sausages. Santa himself made an appearance posing for photos with children of all ages and taking their gift wishes back with him to the North Pole.



Meanwhile, more of Santa's helpers were busy in Santa's gift shop where only children were allowed to purchase (at very reasonable prices!) gifts for family and friends.

This event, which is the major fundraiser for the Hartland Historical Society, could not come together without the many Hartland volunteers and support from the community. You helped make this year's Santa Breakfast the 4th most successful since 2007. Thank you for supporting us in our goal to preserve, display and record the history of our wonderful little town of Hartland. We encourage you to visit our marvelous museum, The Gaylord House, in West Hartland any first Sunday of the month May through October between 2 and 4 PM.



GATES AND BEMAN DESCENDANT GOES TO THE WHITE HOUSE

By Terri Atwood

Gates is a well-known name in the history of Connecticut, both now and at our very start as a colony. Another link to that same Gates family line that produced Jesse and his "sometimes peculiar" family (see previous pages), produced a series of well-educated church and military men, including a Vice President of the United States; all with ties to Hartland.

George Gates Sr. was the ancestor of this lineage, emigrating as a youth from England and one of the original 28 men that settled in Haddam, Connecticut in 1660. The political history of the family in the United States started here, with George serving as a Selectman of Haddam in 1681, a commissioner for 8 years, and a frequent attendee to the General Assembly of Connecticut as the town representative. He also served as a committee member to build the first meeting house, and acted as the original Ensign in the 9th company Haddam militia, eventually being promoted to Lieutenant, and then to Captain before he stepped down in 1697. Daniel, George's son, was grandfather to Jesse; Joseph, brother to Daniel, was great grandfather to Aaron Gates the lineage to the Vice President – so continuing George's legacy of service, church, and education.

Aaron Gates, moved from Haddam to Hartland in 1783 (about 15 years after Jesse) with his wife and two babies, Henry and Aaron. A farmer by trade, he became deacon of the church, and was a respected gentleman in the Hartland area. He served in the Revolutionary War as part of the East Haddam Company of minute men. Six additional children were born after moving to Hartland, several maintained ties to Hartland, while others traveled onward, leaving roots in the local area. Henry, Samuel, and John remained in the local area, and in the case of son Aaron, returned back to Hartland later in life. All are at rest in the East Hartland cemetery.

Henry, born in 1777, married Clarissa Emmons, in 1803. Her father was the first doctor in Hartland (Jeremiah Emmons). In 1820, Henry purchased 4 acres with buildings, including a house, from Philander Humphry, for \$100. The house was originally built in 1764 by Ebenezer Andrews. The house was struck by lightning in 1855, causing Henry and Clarissa to move in with his nephew, where they remained until their deaths in 1860, and 1863 respectively.

Samuel, born in 1793, fought in Captain Hayden's company in the War of 1812. He married Lucy Cowdery of Hartland. Samuel played an active role in Hartland, and was part of a committee to purchase a hearse and build a "hearse house" on the parsonage lot, and during this time also to fence the cemetery (or the burying ground, as records document). A tax of "one and one fourth cents on the dollar on the list of 1825" was committed to carry out these decisions.

John, born in 1795, became a blacksmith, and married Deborah Bushnell, also of Hartland. John bought a house and land from Joel Miner, a blacksmith, in 1824, and added on to the existing house in 1836, and ran it as a hotel for many years. Their house still stands today next to the E.H. cemetery. Deborah's relative, Daniel Bushnell was the builder of the First Church of Hartland in 1801.

Aaron, born in 1780, attended Williams College and studied theology, and went on to become the minister for both the East and West Hartland Congregational churches. It is said that "he was a man whose example and instruction left a deep impression on the character of his children". Also known as "Priest" Gates, son Aaron was described as a frail man physically, but all fire and emotion when in the pulpit and in his day to day life, and held strict to the New England Puritan doctrine of religion, supporting many revival-type gatherings intended to bring new people into the church. The Rev. Aaron Gates embraced the beliefs that centered around the idea that humans were sinners, God was an angry judge, and everyone needed to ask for forgiveness. It was said that "his manner of preaching was so earnest that his tears streamed from the pulpit". He was established as the second pastor of the Congregational church in Montague, MA in 1807 and served there for twenty years. In 1832 he served as pastor in South Amherst, and in 1836 served Hartland's First Congregational Church for six years, and then following in the Second Congregational Church for an additional three years. In 1844 Rev. Gates was appointed to take the formal census for the town. (1840 & 1850 U.S. Census for Hartland: 1,060/848 respectively). He spent his life's work at 44 years in the ministry before his death in 1850 at age 70.

The Rev. Aaron Gates married Ruth Beman of East Hartland in 1805. Ruth's family has military ties to Hartland; her grandfather Lieutenant Thomas Beman, father Captain Daniel and Uncle Ensign Elisha all served in the Revolutionary War. Capt. Daniel married Abigail Ackley of Hartland in 1777 and as a land owner, he was instrumental in having a road laid from his house into the Hartland town center. All are at rest in the East Hartland cemetery.

The fourth son of the Rev. Aaron and Ruth, Beman Gates (a popular custom was the use of surnames as given names) was born during the time the Gates family lived in Montague, MA, in 1818. Beman went on to become one of the most prominent men in the Northwest Territory, an area of Ohio west of the Western Reserve where many other Connecticut settlers emigrated. Beman attended Amherst College, but left before graduating due to a lack of funds. His father, the Rev. Aaron Gates, was well known for living a very frugal, religious life, and no family money was available for schooling. He participated in the family church choir, and was often a featured soloist; his reputation for his singing voice allowed him to be assigned solo parts in the Messiah in Boston under the composer Lowell Mason when he was just 18 years old. Music paved the way for the start of his career; in 1837, on his way to Tennessee to become a teacher, when a traveling companion became ill, and they stopped in Marietta, OH for a time. Beman Gates liked the area, and decided to stay (perhaps some of the impetus to stay was due to the fact that he was out of money). He was offered a choir leader position, accepted, and taught "singing school" as well as working in the office of the county recorder. The ties from the county recorder position led him to working for the Marietta Intelligencer newspaper, and at 21 years of age he became the editor. This position brought him great influence in the area, as there was a general lack of mailing facilities, and the paper had regular correspondents in New York and Washington. He remained editor for 17 years, and also owned the paper for several of these years. Active in the business world of Marietta, he campaigned to build a railroad from Mariette to Cincinnati; he left the newspaper and became VP and Superintendent of the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad company in 1854. The railroad ties led him to become active in supporting movement of supplies to Civil War troops, and he was later commissioned a Lieutenant giving him military authority. Following the path of his increasing influence in the business world of Mariette, he established the First National Bank of Mariette in 1863 and remained its president until 1887. He married Betsey Sybil Shipman in 1841, and they had three children.

Beman's eldest daughter, Mary Beman Gates, married General Rufus Dawes in 1864. He was a commander of the 6th Wisconsin Regiment of the Iron Brigade in the Civil War. Their son, Charles Gates Dawes, later became General Dawes, and ran as the Vice Presidential candidate under Calvin Coolidge, and was elected to that position in 1925. He was described as a banker, general, diplomat, and was also a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1925 for his work on the "Dawes Plan" for World War I reparations. He carried his grandfather's legacy of music as a self-taught composer and is the only Vice President to have had a #1 on the Billboard music charts (a songwriter added lyrics to his composition "Melody in A Major" and it was recorded and landed as number one for six weeks in the fall of 1958).

Many characteristics travel with the family tree, regardless of where those roots take hold. Although the Gates/Beman family still has strong ties to Hartland today, many of the Gates/Beman ancestors that traveled beyond the Hartland borders carried with them the strong convictions, desire to serve, and even musicality through the generations.

Laurie Foulke-Green
FAMILY RESEARCHER



\$ REASONABLE RATE *Let Me Find Your Ancestors* **WILL TRACE ALL FAMILY LINES**

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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

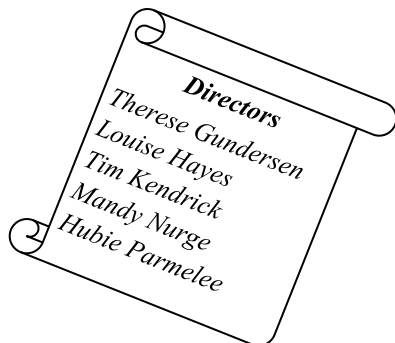
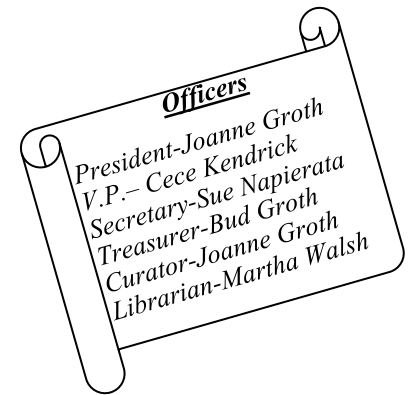
Membership & Donation Envelope Enclosed

Stories of Travel and Circumstance

Marty Podskotch presentation of his new book "Connecticut 169 Club" & HHS membership meeting, Friday, May 17th, E.H. Town Hall, 7PM *Inspiring CT traveler, historian & author*

The Leatherman (1859-1889) *Traveler of CT roads, caves & homes*

Notable descendants of George Gates Sr. (1634-1724) of England. They traveled from East Haddam, CT to settle in Hartland 1758.... **The "sometimes peculiar" and the "politician"**. *Where their inherent natures traversed*



Mark your 2019 Calendars

- ◆ Spring Meeting May 17
- ◆ Blueberry Picnic August 13
- ◆ Fall Meeting Oct. 6
- ◆ Santa Breakfast December 7