

The Historical Herald

The Quarterly Newsletter of



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

PO Box 514

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www.BartlettHistory.org

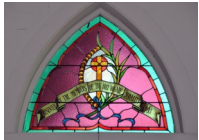
Spring 2021 Edition (2021:2)

The Bartlett

Historical Society

The Campaign Continues...Thank you for your Continued Support

We continue to express our sincere thanks to all who have donated to our museum renovation project. Your support is what keeps us driving forward. The work that has been completed so far, the removal of all the hazardous materials from the building, the installation of our new roof, the leveling of the foyer structure, the new sidewalk and numerous other smaller items were all made possible because of the generous support of 380 individual and business donors and foundations. While there is still a lot of work to be done, we feel we've turned a corner on the project as we start to rebuild the interior of the building. Your continued support and the support of those who have yet to give will bring us across the finish line. Thank you!



Planning, Estimating & Next Steps: This winter, we spent a good deal of time planning for that reconstruction effort. We have obtained cost estimates from plumbing and HVAC contractors as well as for our ADA ramp. We have reviewed an interior lighting design that will allow us to get estimates on the electrical work. We just started to frame the interior walls and we are getting other contractors lined up to continue the reconstruction. While we didn't bang a lot of nails or install any major equipment, we positioned ourselves for the next round of work to be completed in the building. We can't say it enough that all the work completed and work we are planning to do is made possible because of your generosity. Thank you for your continued support for our museum project.

Campaign Progress: To date, with the generous donations of nearly 380 people, grants and businesses, many having made multiple donations, we have raised \$304,489 out of a \$535,000 campaign goal! Our \$10,000 matching challenge was a great success. Again, our thanks to the matching gift donor. Our expenditures for capital improvements, building maintenance and administrative costs are about \$200,000. We are estimating that we need to raise \$231,000 to complete Phase 2 and open the museum. *How can you help get us to this goal?* First, any donation you can make to the project is greatly appreciated. Second, if you know of anyone who is interested in adding their name to our growing list of donors, please contact Phil Franklin, at Phil@BartlettHistory.org. Thank you.

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President's Message

It's hard to believe but the first quarter of the year has flown by. Winter was relatively "easy" here in the mountains and spring is waiting its turn to warm the ground to let the flowers bloom. Through the winter, we've been busy as usual here with the historical society.

Our museum project is gearing up for our next round of renovation activity. Thanks to the generosity of so many of you, we continue to look forward to the next steps in the project. Over the winter, working with our General Contractor, Bill Duggan, we spent time planning our next steps in the renovation. In early April, we will reconstruct the walls in the building. We also plan to get the rough installation of our heating and A/C, plumbing and possibly electrical systems underway. We are continue to search for funding support to complete the renovation. We remain focused on bringing this building, with its recognized historic value in the state of New Hampshire, back to a useful life as our Bartlett history museum.

Our 15th anniversary as a historical society will be on May 16, 2021. Fifteen years old puts us in our adolescence. In many ways that's appropriate as we are a growing organization with many goals and a bright future ahead of us. Over the remainder of the year, minimally, through our newsletter, we are going to do a retrospective look back to 2006 and the beginnings of BHS, highlight our accomplishments and the people who have brought us to where we are today.

Our 2021 BHS Membership Drive is going very well. To date, 174 members have renewed their memberships and 28 have signed on as new members. We are watching our mail box daily to hopefully hear from a number of members who have yet to renew their membership. I would like to thank all of our members, renewing and new, for their support of BHS. In you have not had a chance to renew your membership for 2021, please visit the membership page of our website, print the membership form and send it to us. We value the support of every member.

On January 24, 2021, as a part of our 1st quarter presentation, I reviewed our 2020 BHS Annual Report. This report is available for review on our BHS website. This report is far more extensive than any annual report that we've ever produced. Given the fact that we are growing in membership, we now own and are renovating a historic building, and we are becoming a more active participant in the Bartlett community, I felt a comprehensive report was appropriate. The report reviews our overall 2020 program including our capital campaign and building renovation effort plus our operational and museum financial status. If you have any questions about the information in our 2020 Annual Report, please let me know.

In February, one of our Directors, Hadley Champlin, informed me of an opportunity that was presented to her that she could not pass up. She has taken on a role as a criminal justice educator and law enforcement consultant with the state of New Hampshire. Hadley has an extensive background in law enforcement working in the Cheshire, CT, Portsmouth, NH and Bartlett police departments, retiring as the Chief of the Bartlett Police Department in 2017. She will certainly be a great asset to the state in her new role. As a result, Hadley has reluctantly tendered her resignation from the BHS Board of Directors. Hadley joined the BHS Board in 2018. She was instrumental in the start of the 8th grade Bartlett History Project and brought a great many good ideas and perspectives to the table. She has agreed, however, to remain with BHS as one of our Advisors. We are opening a search for someone to fill Hadley's place on our Board.

Finally, in past newsletters I've written that if you have a question, an idea that can help BHS be "better" or a comment about something you've read or heard about our historical society, please let me know. Several people have contacted me with some interesting ideas. We have or will be implementing several things that started with comments from members. This also gives me an opportunity to chat with members and donors. Our BHS email is BartlettHistoryNH@gmail.com and my email is Phil@BartlettHistory.com. We appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Phil Franklin

President, Bartlett Historical Society
Phil@BartlettHistory.org

Bartlett's Boston Post Cane



The Boston Post was once considered the most widely read newspaper in the nation. It was published from 1831 to 1956. On August 2, 1909, the publisher, Edwin Grozier, sent 700 specially made canes, one each, to the boards of selectmen in towns (not cities) in the states Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Rhode Island according to the Boston Post Cane Information Center. Bartlett was one of the 700 towns. The canes were created and sent as a publicity stunt by Grozier to promote the newspaper. The canes arrived with a fairly simple set of instructions. First, the cane was to be owned by the receiving town; second, it was to be awarded to the oldest *citizen* in the town (no specific age was provided); third, when the cane was awarded, the town was to report that award with a story about the recipient to the Boston Post for publication in the paper; finally, when the cane holder died, the family was to return the cane to the town selectmen and it would be awarded to the “new” oldest citizen. Over the years, some towns have modified these rules with some saying the recipient must be 90 years old or older, others award the cane to their most active volunteer for one year only. Of the 700 original canes, approximately 500 are known to still exist. The missing have been lost, stolen or accidentally destroyed.

Initially, Grozier defined “citizen” as the oldest male citizen in the town but in 1930 that was changed and women started being included in this award.



The canes were made by J. F. Fradley and Company of New York, New York, a leading



manufacturer of fine canes. Each cane stood 36” tall with a very light and slender shaft made of Gaboon ebony wood imported from the Congo in Africa. The head of the cane is 2” of carefully molded 14-carot gold. The very top of each cane head has a small disc that is inscribed with the same wording on each except that the town name individualizes the inscription. Bartlett’s cane disc reads: *Presented by the Boston Post to the Oldest Citizen of Bartlett, NH.* The bottom point of the cane is covered in a ferruled tip. This is a very elegant cane.

Over the past couple of months, several people have approached members of the historical society board of directors asking if we know of the whereabouts of Bartlett’s Boston Post Cane. We posed that question to Gene Chandler, one of our selectmen. Gene said that the original cane is in the town safe, adding that we have two replicas, one of which is handed out if we can identify the oldest person in town and if they will accept it. Those two “ifs” are the issue. The first “if” relates to identifying the oldest person in town. As Bartlett has grown and people are moving in and out of town, the selectmen have found it difficult to identify our oldest citizen. The second “if” relates to a supposed curse that comes with the cane. That curse says that if you receive the cane, your death is imminent. Because of this, people have rejected the honor of having the cane presented to them. Bartlett citizens receiving the cane include Louis Chappee, Hilda Howard, Jennie Mahany (1985), Ruby Mead (1986), Hellen Hayes (1992), and Margery Wakefield (1998). A future BHS project will be to research the full list of people who were awarded the cane. If you can help with identifying the oldest person in Bartlett who is eligible to receive the cane, please drop a note to Gene Chandler at: 'Town of Bartlett' selectmen@townofbartlettnh.org.

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8th Grade Bartlett History Project—Enters its 3rd Year!

In late February, we kicked off another year of the Bartlett History Project with the Josiah Bartlett Elementary School 2021 8th grade class. Faculty members Jennifer Lord, our primary contact, and Librarian Karen Arendt are working with BHS President Phil Franklin coordinating this year's project. Students have selected a variety of topics to explore including the Experimental Forest, the history of Bartlett schools, the Kearsarge Peg Mill history, Livermore history, Storyland history, railroading in Bartlett, the Willey house disaster, Bartlett and Jackson hotel/tourism history and several other topics. Students are using a variety of sources to gain information on their topics and the historical society is helping point them to other sources of information as well. As we have done in the past, BHS will award the Bartlett History Award to the student who is judged to have most successfully met the criteria of the assignment. Their project work will be due in mid-May.



Railroad Committee Update

Scotty Mallett, our BHS railroad historian, is continuing his quest for information about Bartlett railroading. While still researching the lives of Samuel and John Anderson, he is beginning research on logging railroads starting with the Bartlett & Albany Railroad. Other topics being explored include the Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad, bridges, trestles, retaining walls and the remains of the logging railroads (today some of the rail beds are hiking trails). Scotty is also looking for assistance in the railroad research. The research requires a fair amount of reading, basic computer skills, knowledge of how to research topics and a willingness to explore different rail related topics. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, please contact Scotty. Also, if you have information on Bartlett railroad history, we're interested in learning about what have. Again, Scotty is the contact person. Scotty is willing to do a Zoom meeting or can be contacted at 603-383-3040, by USPS at PO Box 35, Glen, NH 03838 or email at Scottymallett@gmail.com.



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building, please have them
contact us.



We'd enjoy talking with them.

Phil Franklin
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BHS 2021 Quarterly Presentation Lineup!



2021 Presentation Series – Switching to ZOOM!


With the COVID-19 virus still very active everywhere, the BHS Board of Directors has decided that we need to adjust how we meet for our 2021 Quarterly Presentation Series, at least for the time being. For the safety of everyone we are going to use the Zoom platform over the Internet for our April presentation.

Recap: BHS Annual Meeting and “A Snapshot of Bartlett’s Railroad History” by Scotty Mallett

We held our BHS Annual Meeting on January 24, 2021 via Zoom. In that meeting, Phil Franklin reviewed the highlights of our 2020 BHS Annual Report. The full report is available for review on our BHS website (www.BartlettHistory.org). We also elected our 2021 officers and directors at this meeting. Following this portion of the meeting, Scotty Mallett, our BHS Railroad Committee leader and historian, provided an overview of a variety of railroad sites in Bartlett and Hart’s Location, noting the significance of each site. This was a very informative review and we thank Scotty for his work for BHS.

Upcoming Presentations:

Wednesday, April 21 “NH Fish & Game—The History Behind this State Department”

This program, requested by a BHS member, will provide an overview of the work of the Fish & Game Department. We’ll hear about their work as law enforcement officers to their management of the forests and wildlife throughout the state of NH. This will bring the *Northwoods Law* TV program  *Connecting You to Life Outdoors™* to life for us!

Zoom Internet Platform (link information to be sent in April), Time: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 16: “A Vigorous, Full-Blooded, Ardent Club: The History of the Appalachian Mountain Club” by Becky Fullerton, AMC Archivist

Founded in 1876, the AMC’s mission is to foster the protection, enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors. Becky will tell us about the long history of the AMC and their work in the White Mountains.



Location TBD, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21: “A Century of Railroading in Crawford Notch” with Ben English

From the 1860’s to the late 1950’s, the railroads played a major role in the growth and vitality of the area.



Ben, a railroad historian and BHS member, will tell us about the rise and fall of the railroads in our area. (Rescheduled from October 2020)

Location TBD, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Even though we are switching to the Zoom Internet meeting platform, all of our programs are open to the public. We hope that by using the Internet technology our presentations will be attended by people from places outside the Mount Washington Valley.

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Gene Chandler

Local Farm Boy to State Representative and Speaker of the House

By Phil Franklin

Gene Chandler is probably best known in Bartlett and the surrounding towns as the chairman of our town's board of selectman; in the state of New Hampshire, he's a well-known former member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives and three time Speaker of the House. But, there's a lot more to the story of Gene Chandler than his political life would reveal. When I asked Gene if he would be willing to have a conversation with me to tell the story of his life, he replied that he would but we'd only fill a paragraph or two. As you'll see, we covered far more than a few sentences in our conversation.



Brief Family Biography

Gene was born in 1947 in Damariscotta, Maine. His mother, Flora Chandler, was visiting her parents and his grandparents in Boothbay, Maine when she unexpectedly went into labor. Gene was born at the local hospital. So, while officially born in Maine, Gene came home to the family farm here in Bartlett. He mentioned that his family lived in Jackson for a short period but his formative years were spent here in Bartlett. Gene said that he has one sister plus two half-brothers and a half-sister. Gene's father, Earle Walter Chandler, Sr., managed the family farm and held positions in local and state politics while living here in Bartlett and, later, while living in Wilnot, NH.

Gene's grade school years were right here in Bartlett and high school was at Kennett High School in North Conway. Gene married Nancy Sheehan in 1969. They were married for 34 years when, sadly, Nancy died in 2003. Gene and Nancy had two sons. Erik Chandler lives in town and is the owner of E. G. Chandler, Inc. a property management company and is a loyal sponsor of this newsletter and member of BHS. Eric has two daughters. Justin Chandler makes his home with his wife and two daughters in Telluride, Colorado. Gene mentioned that both boys skied in school. Justin skied in the Junior Olympics and attended the University of Colorado. Gene coached a little league team here in town with both of his boys on the team for a while. He was also the president of the Attitash Ski Club and Chairman of the Mount Washington Valley Ski Team.

The Chandler Farm

The Chandler farm was located east of today's Attitash Ski Resort with the farm house on lower part of today's Cow Hill Road. The farm was between 300 and 350 acres in size. The fields and barn were located across Route 302 in what is today the Fields of Attitash. The barn was located up the hill from the fields near Route 302. The fields extended northward across the railroad tracks down to the bank of the Saco River and to the west up to the border of the current Attitash Mountain Village complex. These fields are used today for overflow parking for the ski resort.

The family property also included the site of the current Attitash Motel and Suites that is located at the other end of Cow Hill Road by Route 302 just across from the entrance to the Fields of Attitash (shown on some maps as Earle's Field Road). This property was owned by Gene's grandfather, Walter Jacob Chandler. On this site, Gene said that his grandfather or great grandfather was the keeper of the town pound. The pound was the location where stray animals from dogs to sheep to cows were brought until the owners came to claim them. The pound was a large stone walled structure with a watering trough. It was demolished in the 1970's to make room for the motel. Today, the site has a plaque affixed to a large boulder to commemorate the location of the pound.



The Chandler farm was a dairy farm and in the fields they grew several crops including potatoes, corn, pumpkins and hay. The farm was a place where chores were expected to be done on a daily basis but also where Gene had a good deal of fun. He said that after school each day, his job was to herd the cows back to the barn to be fed and milked. He also recalled in the mid-1950's he became a part of the crew digging potatoes in the fall. Much the same as there are pick your own apple orchards today, locals would join in on the picking operation. They were paid ten cents per bushel picked. The Chandlers also stored potatoes in their basement and sold them to local grocery stores in Bartlett Village as well as at their farm stand.

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Gene Chandler continued ...

The boys working the fields made \$4 – \$5 per day. In the field, the potatoes were put into bags with two bushels in a bag. Saturday was the delivery day to the stores in Bartlett Village including G. K. Howard's, Mallett's Store (previously Donahue's Store) and Grant's Market in Glen. Gene confessed that the occasional rock would be substituted for a potato or two in the bags to fill the bags quicker!

The family farm is where Gene was also introduced to the timber industry. He said that they used to harvest birch logs off of Cow Hill (the hill east of Attitash Ski Resort) and sell the birch to the Kearsarge Peg Mill. The peg mill used the birch to make pegs for shoes in the early to mid-part of the 1900's. Some of the wood from the Chandler woodlot was also used for firewood. The logging road to access the timber (today's Cow Hill Road closely follows the path of the old logging road) became a sliding hill with a couple of sharp turns for the local children in the winter. Gene said that a good sliding run would get you all the way down from the top of the hill to the bottom at Route 302. Across Route 302 the local kids made a ski jump, the more snow on the ground, the larger the jump. It's there where many of the local boys, including the Head brothers, learned to ski jump and some would eventually be a part of the high school ski jumping team.

Another farming activity was the annual harvest of baled hay. Gene recalled that he was about eight or nine years old when he became a part of the haying crew. While the bales were far too large and heavy for him to lift, he was given the responsibility of driving the pickup truck on which the bales were stacked, 52 bales to a truck load. He told of how one of the adults would set the automatic throttle of the truck to a constant slow roll. Gene would steer the truck around the hay bales. He was unable to reach the gas or brake pedals but strong enough to turn the manual steering wheel. When he was older, he was lifting the bales and eventually stacking them in the barn. Gene remarked that when it came time to get his driver's license, he was more than ready to take the driving test because he had been driving many different farm machines for years.

Looking back on some of the chores Gene had on the farm, he thought of the danger involved that, while apparent today, was just considered part of farm work back then. For example, when Gene was around 12 or 13 years old and able to handle the bales of hay, he would be in the loft of the barn and responsible for stacking the bales. He said that it was good work until the loft was filled and there was no place left to stand. The adults down below thought it "was great fun" to keep putting bales on the conveyor belt that was delivering them to the second level of the barn. An even more dangerous job was being in the corn silage silo as it was being filled from above. After the corn harvest was completed, the stalks were ground for silage and stored in the silo to feed the cows. Gene had to be in the silo while the silage was being poured in from the top. As the silage came down, he had to level it so there was an even distribution of the material in the silo. This was before the days of any sort of personal protective equipment so when he came out of the silo at the top, he would be covered in silage and dust. While farm work was not easy, it had its rewards. Gene mentioned when the farm chores were done that there was always something fun to do. The kids played outside all of the time. When they were done with haying, for example, on a hot summer's day, he enjoyed a cold beer from the supply that his father kept in the milk cooler. He said was "the best tasting beer he ever had" even though he was well underage.

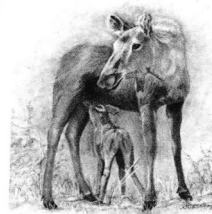
Elementary and High School Years

Gene attended the Bartlett Elementary School for grades 1 – 8. As all Bartlett high schoolers did, he went to Kennett High School in North Conway for grades 9 – 12. In the early 1950's, there was no kindergarten in Bartlett. Gene remarked that kindergarten was working on the farm. In elementary school, Gene admitted that

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Gene Chandler continued ...

most subjects were not his favorites but he added that he liked math, New Hampshire and American history, and civics. Gene lamented that in the curriculum of today, the emphasis on civics has diminished. Gene said that his favorite teacher was his first grade teacher, Lucille Garland. This is a comment we've heard from several of our interviewees. He mentioned two other teachers. First, was the principal and teacher, Alice Davis, who happened to be Gene's aunt but he quickly added that she played no favorites and disciplined him as she would have with any other student. Second was Sal Manna, a science teacher. At Bartlett, he played baseball and basketball. He played first base for the baseball team and was the center on the basketball team. He remarked that he was among the tallest in his sixth grade class but never grew an inch after that so he eventually lost the center position to taller teammates.

As an aside, following-up on his concern of the lack of civics education, Gene noted that when he was a selectman and state representative, Ben English, a local noted railroad historian and then civics teacher, would invite him into the classroom to talk about local and state government. Gene educated the students on the town meeting process and process for managing a bill in the legislature. Gene said the students had mock elections and learned how to place issues on the ballot for voting (their biggest "issue" was to have "no school.") Gene's late wife, Nancy, while teaching at Conway Elementary School, arranged field trips to the state capital building in Concord where Gene would tour the students through the building. To his amazement, most of the students had never been to the capital.

On to high school – Gene went to Kennett High School in 1965. While at Kennett, he played on the golf team. Additionally, he played fast pitch softball on the North Conway All-Start, a team managed by the late John Cannell, a former BHS member and well known baseball enthusiast. Gene played second base and, eventually, moved to his favorite position, first base. This team traveled and had quite a good reputation in the area for being an outstanding and challenging competitor. He also played for Merlino's restaurant softball team. Gene said he played softball until he was 40 years old and stopped only because he couldn't see the ball at night anymore. He also played team basketball for the Conway traveling team. Gene continued to play golf throughout his adult life but admitted he hasn't played in quite a while now.

Outside of school, Gene was an avid fisherman. He added that he always took the first day of fishing season off from school and traversed up Razor Brook, a large mountain stream here in Bartlett that feeds into the Saco River. This day off was without parental permission but he added that he never got in trouble for taking the day to himself even as he left the house in the morning on his bicycle with his fishing pole on a school day. Fishing was a big pastime for the local boys when they were growing up.


Gene's close friends included Norm and John Head as well as Albert Henn who were all neighbors on Route 302. The Chandler's didn't have television so Gene and his father would go over to the Henn's house on Friday evenings to watch the Gillette sponsored boxing matches. Gene mentioned that he had many other friends but decided not to name names only because he was concerned he would forget someone.

College and the Start of Gene's Work Life

After high school, Gene attended New Hampshire College of Accounting and Commerce, the current day Southern New Hampshire University, to study accounting. Since the school had no campus, he lived in an apartment in Manchester. The owners of the school wanted to make it into a full-fledged college so they offered sports to attract students. Gene joined the ski team and golf team. As a Division 3 school, the teams did quite well competing against other ski teams. Gene said that he found that the math, which he enjoyed in high school, was not the same math as used by accountants so he changed majors and became the first liberal arts major in the New Hampshire College. After a year at New Hampshire College, he took some time off. He then decided to attend Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan. He went there because his friends John Head and Peter Garland were Olivet students. He admitted that attending because of other friends being there wasn't the best reason for enrolling at Olivet. Gene said that after a year at Olivet, he ended his college career. Michigan and the mid-west were just not for him.

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Gene Chandler continued ...

Returning from college, he worked for the forest service, a continuation of his summer work. He was a trail crew worker and eventually a trail crew boss. He also worked at the Carroll Reed shops and the Jack Frost shops. While working for these two local stores, part of his job involved working at their ski mountain shops. He also worked for the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation for a while in their early years. Gene spent some time working for New England Lumber out of West Osippee buying and selling timber. He eventually ventured out on his own in the timber business. He also obtained his real estate agent's license and joined Gribbel, Wason & Jones Realtors. He is still in the real estate business today affiliated with Black Bear Realty.

Political Life

Gene's involvement in local and state politics overshadows all of the other things he has accomplished in his working career. The world of politics is Gene's hallmark. He is a lifelong Republican. While still in middle school, Gene's father, Earle, was serving in the State House of Representatives. He gave Gene his first taste of the political world when he would allow him to skip school and accompany him to the state house in Concord. This happened quite often but not every week. He said "it was a heck of a lot better than going to school" when he first started making these trips but then he really became interested in the activities of the legislators. Watching his father work with the other legislators gave Gene a first-hand look at how politics worked at the state level.



Earle Chandler, Sr.

The Chandler family has a history of being in political office whether it be locally or at the state level. In Bartlett, Gene is a fourth generation selectman. According to our town's Annual Reports, Gene's father, Earle, was a selectman from 1950 – 1964 and his grandfather, Walter, was a selectman from 1914 – 1917. His great grandfather, John, was a selectman in 1876 and 1916 (according to Aileen Carroll in her book, Bartlett, NH ... in the Valley of the Saco). Earle also served in the State House of Representatives while living in Bartlett and while living Wilmot Flat, NH. Gene's brother, Charlie, served in the State House of Representatives representing the town of Northfield, NH. At one point, Earle, Charlie and Gene were state representatives at the same time.

Local Politics – Bartlett Selectman

In 1974, as a member of the Republican Party, Gene ran for and was elected to a position on the Bartlett Board of Selectmen. He said that other than the influence of his father and his enjoyment of the political world, he really had no other reason for running for office. He has been a Bartlett town selectman for the past 47 years and has been the chair of the town select board for several years. His current term ends in 2022. His philosophy of governing is to take a low key attitude, spend appropriately and make wise decisions for the town. He knows that people don't always agree with his decisions or positions but, as he puts it, that's all part of politics.

We talked a bit about things he considers as his top accomplishments. The first thing he mentioned was that he has always looked to keep the town taxes low while still providing adequate services for people. He feels it's too easy to spend a lot of money. His position is that taxes should be set to be commensurate with what the least affluent people can afford. Gene acknowledges that this means there are some things that don't get done in the town or that take a little longer to accomplish but he is looking to be fair to everyone paying taxes. His frustration is with some people who move into town, especially more recently, who are expecting things to change to the way things were done in their former hometown. The other major accomplishment was the building of the new fire station in the Glen section of town. When the state was replacing the old bridge over the Ellis River near Patch's Market, they needed to remove the old fire station and selectmen's office building that was located by the old bridge. As compensation to the town for the loss of the fire station, the state agreed to build a new fire station on the property of the state DOT garage just a few hundred yards from the old fire station.

Looking at things that could have been handled better over the years, Gene feels that the maintenance of town roads is an area where the town got behind. A big problem with the roads is that many were not properly constructed and when they were turned over to the town, many were in rough condition. He feels that, with a road maintenance plan, the town is getting the roads in much better shape now.

State Representative and Speaker of the House

From a state legislative perspective, Gene was first elected to the State House of Representatives in 1984.

... continued on next page

Gene Chandler continued ...

A special election was called to fill the seat of Representative Donald Howard, who had passed away while in state office. Gene won that election defeating his friend Ross Heald. Gene was appointed to the Public Works and Highway Committee. This was a prime appointment, especially for a new legislator. He was on this committee for his entire time in the legislature with the exception of the time he was the Speaker of the House. Gene served as the chair of the committee for several years. Gene quickly moved into an effective role using his relationships with other legislators. Adding to his philosophy on governing, he feels that representatives in the legislature should “represent their constituents.” He feels that too often, elected officials at local, state and national levels forget who elected them and that they represent all of the people in their district, not just a select few. Gene was on the Fish and Game Committee because of his strong interest in hunting and fishing. He was the Majority Leader from 1998 - 2000. He was also the Speaker of the House from 2000 - 2004 and again in 2018 filling the remaining year of the term for Speaker Shawn Jasper who, mid-term as Speaker, was appointed as the Agriculture Commissioner. Gene said at the time of this 2018 term as Speaker that he would only fill the remaining year of the position but would not run as Speaker for another full term, and true to his word, that is what he did.



NH Capital Building,
built 1816—1819

Gene’s legislative work covers a lot of ground for his many years in Concord but he feels his biggest accomplishment was spearheading the state’s purchase of 177,000 acres of land in northern Coos County known as the IP Land (International Paper). He felt the purchase, a one-time opportunity, was critically important to the state as it preserved this large tract of land as a wilderness area. Key to this was getting a \$10,000,000 state bond with additional funding from other concerned groups. With the funding package set, the land was placed into conservation easements and a citizen’s advisory task force, which Gene is still on, was established to oversee the property. Timber companies have since purchased easements in the acreage. All of the traditional uses hunting, fishing, trapping, and snowmobiling have been allowed to continue on this property. For his efforts in this purchase, Gene was recognized by all four members of the state’s federal congressional delegation.

The second accomplishment that he noted was a bill that he co-sponsored with Representative Paul Lamont from Haverhill. This bill established that funding for state highway maintenance be distributed equally between the five DOT highway districts in the state. Previously, funds were disproportionately weighted to the lower part of the state leaving the northern areas struggling for funding. This signaled a major improvement in the DOT’s ability to maintain our state highways in the northern districts.

Among the many awards and recognitions that Gene has received over the years, is one from the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association (NHTOA). Gene has always been a supporter of the forest industry and biomass plants. He sponsored or co-sponsored several pieces of legislation that promoted and supported the timber industry. In 2017, the NHTOA presented Gene with their President’s Award.

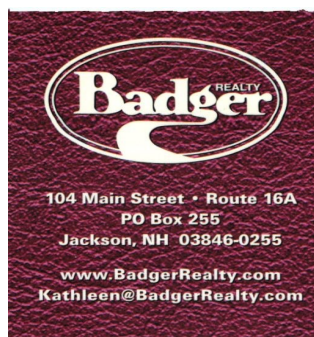


In 2004, while ending his second term as Speaker of the House, Gene ran into some rough waters as the state Attorney General’s Office began an investigation for possible ethics violations. At the heart of the issue was the possible misuse of and failure to report campaign donations. It was alleged that Gene was using these funds for personal gains. Gene said that prior to this investigation, he had checked with state officials and was told that he did not need to report these funds but the investigation concluded otherwise. ... continued on next page



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Gene Chandler continued ...

Gene plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge of failing to report to the secretary of state campaign donations that were raised through fundraising events over a several year period. The fundraising occurred primarily at his then Corn Roast Gala, a picnic held at the Glen Ellis Campground that was attended by politicians and friends from both major parties. At the end of the investigation, members of the Legislative Ethics Committee recommended Gene's expulsion from the House but House members, instead, voted to reprimand him. Gene added that he was and is very grateful to all of the support he received from the people in the area whom he represented during this troubling time. While the investigation and entire issue has been closed for many years, political opponents have occasionally resurfaced the incident.

In 2018, Gene was again running for his seat in the House of Representatives. His opponent was the Democratic candidate, Anita Burroughs, who, as the vote tally showed, defeated Gene ending his 34 year career in the New Hampshire House of Representatives. Looking back on this career, Gene said he misses all of the friends he made while working for his constituents. He doesn't, however, enjoy seeing the partisan politics that are being played in the current legislature. Again, going back to his approach of working across the aisle, Gene said that there were times in the legislature when he and others agreed to disagree and he would still being able to go out to dinner with his "opponents" after a hard fought debate. At least in this interview, he said he has no plans to run for a state seat again.

In Closing ...

While known primarily for his political career, Gene has broadened our perspective on his life through this interview. Moving from the dairy farm on Cow Hill Road and the fields across the way to one of the most powerful positions in New Hampshire state government, Gene has demonstrated his commitment to the people of the town and state. While he leaves room for both agreement and disagreement in his political world, he is still working for the best interest the town. On behalf of the Bartlett Historical Society, of which Gene is a member, I thank him for spending the time with me to tell his story. This interview was recorded and will be available in our future museum building.

AAA Membership Offer—A Surprise for Josiah Bartlett!

In February, we found an unusual letter in our BHS post office mailbox. It was an offer to the one and only *Josiah Bartlett* for a AAA Membership, complete with a temporary membership card and membership number. Our town was named in honor of Dr. Bartlett but since he has been deceased for the past 226 years (he died in 1795), we hoped AAA made a mistake. Still, just for fun, we placed a call to the Northern New England AAA office in Portland, ME to get their reaction. A person working in their front office thought this was quite amusing. We'll keep an eye out for any other mail addressed to him.



How Can You Donate to BHS?

There are several options: Cash or Check; Credit Card; Amazon Smile; Gift-in-Kind; Stock Transfer

Donations to BHS that are designated to the Museum Fund or that are undesignated are currently funneled to the Museum Fund; donations designated to the General Fund are directed to our operating fund.

All donations are greatly appreciated and we thank you for your continued support.

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15th Anniversary for BHS!

Anniversaries mark the occurrence of notable past events. Our lives are filled with many anniversary dates, some celebrated, some not. May 16 is our BHS Anniversary date. On this date in 2021, we mark 15 years of being dedicated to our mission to collect and preserve the history of Bartlett and, now including Hart's Location, and offering educational opportunities for people to learn about this history. It also marks 15 years of dedicated support from our many members, donors and volunteers, with who are the heart and soul of the Bartlett Historical Society.



In 2006, a small group of residents met to launch our historical society of today. This followed earlier efforts to form a local historical society. On May 16, 2006, the Bartlett Historical Society was officially reinstated as a corporation with the State of New Hampshire, Department of State. Our membership was only five people at that time and all five were on our board of directors. They were Leslie Mallett, President; Bert George, Vice President; Linda Chisholm, Secretary; Jean Gustin, Treasurer and John Murphy, Director.

As our current BHS President, Phil Franklin, noted, we are in our adolescence. We have grown as a historical society and still have a great deal of room to grow; we have made some mistakes, corrected them and also have had many successes; and we have a bright future with plans to continue our stewardship of our local history, discover more about our past, and be even more active in the Bartlett community.

Over the past 15 years, our society has seen growth and decline in our membership. In the past six years we have had a steady, and hopefully sustained, level of membership growth. We have formed committees to review important aspects of our town and regional history. We've recognized that our history is with the people who have toiled to bring us from the late 1700's to today and we are collecting the histories of many people. We have restored our snow roller giving Bartlett a rare artifact of North Country winter living. In 2016, we stepped into a project that will result in the opening of our museum and permanent BHS headquarters. There, we'll be able to offer displays showing snapshots of our local and regional history in a building that, itself, has recognized historic value in the state of New Hampshire.



What are we going to do to celebrate this anniversary? Minimally, we plan to take a more detailed look at our BHS in our next two newsletters. Other plans, such as a celebration event, are dependent on the state of the COVID-19 virus. Stay tuned for updates.

So 15th Happy Anniversary to ourselves! This will be just one of many milestones in the history of the Bartlett Historical Society.

Bartlett Historical Society—Board of Directors

Philip Franklin, President	Hannah Chandler, Vice President
Susan Franklin, Treasurer	Kathleen Howard, Curator
Open Position	Open Position

BHS Board Advisors

David Eliason, Michael Chandler, Norman Head, George Howard,
Anne Pillion, Hadley Champlin



Lupines are a sure sign of spring!