

The Historical Herald

The Quarterly Newsletter of



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

PO Box 514

Bartlett, NH 03812

www.BartlettHistory.org

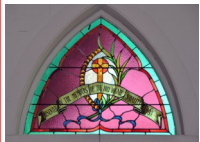
Summer 2021 Edition (2021:3)

The Bartlett

Historical Society

The Campaign Continues...Thank You For Your Continued Support

We express our sincere thanks to all who have donated to our museum renovation project. Donors continue to show their support for this project through their generosity. Your support is what keeps us driving forward, and forward we are moving. All of the work completed to date, the large and small items, is a result of donations, large and small, from people who share our vision for the museum and want to invest in the completion of the project, for this is an important community cultural project. When we've brought people into the building to see the work we've accomplished, many take a moment to pause upon entry because they are amazed at what they see. They can now see the direction we are taking with the renovation and they like what they see. We



recently had a gentleman in the building who told us that he was an altar server for the church many decades ago. He spent a good deal of time walking around the museum space recalling his time in service in the building and listening to our plans for its future. While there is still a lot of work to be done, we still feel we've turned a corner on the project as we start to rebuild the building's interior. Your continued support, and the support of those who have yet to give, will bring us across the finish line. Thank you!

New Accomplishments & Plans: All of the interior wall framing has been completed. New front doors have been installed to replace the old warped doors. The ADA ramp door has been installed. We've installed new clapboards on the front foyer section of the building. Rough plumbing has been installed and soon, the rough HVAC will be installed. We've reviewed the electrical plan with the electrician and plan to have that rough work started soon. Bill Duggan, our General Contractor, and Phil Franklin met with representatives from Bergeron Technical Services for an inspection of the building to date and to address questions pertaining to building code requirements. Bergeron engineers felt that we are in good shape regarding our design and adherence to the building codes. We've devised a plan to protect our stained glass windows by placing them in "light boxes" allowing us to back-light the windows day or night to show off their beautiful color and design. We are working with a local concrete contractor to design a large concrete slab that will support our ADA ramp. We were also pleased to learn that we have been awarded a grant through the NH Charitable Foundation to cover the cost of our ADA ramp. As you can see, a lot has happened in the past three months. What's Next? After we get the rough installation of the mechanical systems behind us, the next steps are exterior windows, insulation and sheetrock/wall board, and the fundraising for this work.

Campaign Progress: To date, with the generous donations of 383 people, grants and businesses, many having made multiple donations, we have raised \$309,300 out of a \$535,000 campaign goal! Our expenditures for capital improvements, building maintenance and administrative costs are about \$231,000. We are estimating that we need to raise \$225,700 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.

Donors from 03/16/2021—06/23/2021

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President's Message

Summer is upon us here in the White Mountains. A new cover of green has filled in the mountain sides where there were leafless trees, flowers are blooming, bicyclists are back on the roadsides and school children are on vacation. At the Historical Society, we are driving forward with several things and happy to be very busy.

We have wrapped up another year working with the Bartlett 8th graders and Jennifer Lord, our faculty contact, on the Bartlett History Project. Our 2021 Bartlett History Award winner is Ella Ugino of Jackson for her project, The Willey Family Landslide Tragedy. The Bartlett History Project challenges the students in several ways but, most importantly, it gives them a chance to discover new things about their hometown and region. This year, we expanded the project to include history from Jackson and Hart's Location. I enjoyed working with the students again this year, albeit from a remote perspective because of virus restrictions at the school.

Our work on the Bartlett History Museum project continues. While we still have several steps to get us to an opening celebration, and funding to raise to pay for those steps, walking into the building you can now see progress toward our end goal. I want to express my personal thanks and appreciation to all of our donors for it is with your generosity that we have been able to get to the point we are today. Also, my continued thanks to our friend and general contractor, Bill Duggan, for his work and effort with his crew on the building process. Bill and I spend a lot of time together planning our next steps, discussing options, and figuring out how we can stretch your donated dollars for the best benefit of the project. Bill's expertise and commitment to delivering a quality product are greatly appreciated.

With positive news about the pandemic and the relaxing of restrictions, we have revived our in-person quarterly presentation series. We are very grateful for the support from the leadership of the Union Congregational Church in Bartlett as they have generously allowed us to use the church sanctuary for our presentations. There's more information about our upcoming presentations on page 5, including the rescheduling of our NH Fish & Game presentation.

I have asked our BHS Board of Directors to start thinking about the scheduling of events between now and the end of 2022. With the pandemic, we basically stopped all events but it's now time to at least start planning for future activities. As we get an events calendar developed, we'll let you know what is coming. We'd really enjoy seeing everyone again.

We've added two new BHS Board members and a new BHS Advisor. Peg Fish and Rachael Brown have joined our BHS Board of Directors. David Shedd has joined our Advisory Panel. We have a separate article in this newsletter making this announcement. I thank Peg, Rachael and David for their engagement as BHS leaders.

I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who is involved in and supports the Bartlett Historical Society. It's truly heart-warming when people see me and compliment the work we are doing to reopen our former church/future museum, when people call or write to tell me a story of their connection to Bartlett history or when people thank us for the work we are doing to preserve the history of this great little town. I've said this many times, and I mean what I say, "We are the historical society that we are today because of you – our members and donors." Without you and your support, we don't exist so I, in turn, thank you for the support you show and demonstrate for YOUR historical society.

Finally, 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

Town of Bartlett – Back to the Beginning—231 Years Ago

On June 16, 2021, Bartlett celebrated (very quietly) its 231st anniversary as an incorporated town in New Hampshire. From Aileen Carroll's Book, *Bartlett, New Hampshire ... in the valley of the Saco*, we learn that the first town meeting was held on July 9, 1790. At that meeting, the town government was established. The main agenda was focused on the appointment of people to hold the usual town official positions such as selectmen, John Pendexter, Enoch Emery and Jonathan Tasker; town clerk, Jonathan Tasker; town moderator, Joseph Pitman; tax collector and constable, Richard Garland; and surveyors of the highways, Enoch Emery and Obed Hall. Other town positions were also filled at this important first town meeting.

The area we know as "Bartlett" actually started in October 1765 as Governor Wentworth granted thousands of acres of land to several distinguished veterans of the French and Indian Wars. Over time, these grants were either sold off or developed. Three of Bartlett's earliest settlers were Enoch Emery, Humphrey Emery and Nathaniel Harriman, who purchased acreage from William Stark.

So, we say "Happy Anniversary to Us, with many more to come!"

Patriotic Quilt Raffle—Museum Project Fundraiser

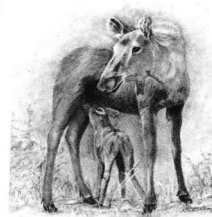
To help raise funds for our museum renovation project, Sue Franklin, our BHS Treasurer and a very experienced quilter, has made and quilted a bright, beautiful red, white and blue quilt that we are raffling. The quilt measures 63" x 76". Tickets are \$5 each or a book of 5 tickets is \$20. We are selling tickets through October 20, 2021, and will have the drawing at our last BHS Quarterly Presentation event for 2021 on that date. We have 400 tickets available for this raffle.



To purchase tickets, send Sue a note at PO Box 514, Bartlett, NH 03812, stating the number of tickets you'd like to purchase with a check for the tickets. We'll also be selling tickets at BHS events prior to October 20th. All funds raised in this raffle will go directly to our museum renovation project.

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8th Grade Bartlett History Project—Completes Its 3rd Year!

Our third year of the Bartlett History Project with the 8th grade class of the Josiah Bartlett Elementary School (JBES) is in the books! Over the past five months, students have researched a variety of topics related to the history of Bartlett, Jackson and Hart's Location. They presented their reports to their classmates as well as Jennifer Lord, their teacher and our faculty contact, and Phil Franklin, our BHS President. The four students who were judged to have most successfully completed their project presented their work before BHS Board members, family members and JBES faculty. The final four topics were on the story of Willey Family Landslide Tragedy in Hart's Location, the history of the Tyrol Ski Slope in Jackson, the history of Bartlett's Kearsarge Peg Mill and the history of the Bartlett Experimental Forest. All four students did outstanding jobs demonstrating their knowledge of their topics. In the end, the winner of the 2021 Bartlett History Award was Ella Ugino of Jackson for her work on the Willey Family Landslide Tragedy. We look forward to the start of this program again in 2022 with a new 8th grade class.



Ella Ugino (R) with
JBES Teacher,
Jennifer Lord

Railroad Committee Update

Scotty Mallet, our BHS Railroad Committee chair, has continued his work on the biographies of brothers Samuel and John Anderson, the railroad pioneers in Bartlett. Scotty is also wrapping up his work on the history of the Bartlett & Albany Railroad, a logging railroad that worked in the area of what we know today as Bear Notch Road. Using LIDAR technology (laser imaging, detection and ranging), Scotty has been able to map the rail lines for the Bartlett & Albany Railroad through the mountains on the southern side of Bartlett. If you are interested in being a part of this committee or if you have any regional railroad information, please contact Scotty. 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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There are several options: Cash or Check; Credit Card; Amazon Smile; Gift-in-Kind; Stock Transfer, Matching Gift from your employer

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.

*Bartlett Historical Society is a 501 c 3 organization.
All donations may be tax deductible*

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BHS 2021 Quarterly Presentation Lineup!

2021 Presentation Series – We're Back to In-Person Presentations!!

With the restrictions related to the COVID-19 virus easing, and a return to careful but more normal social activities, we are moving back to our live, in-person presentation format. The leadership of the Union Congregational Church, on the corner of Albany Avenue and Route 302, has graciously offered their church sanctuary to us as a meeting location and we have accepted their offer. This space allows for social distancing, good air flow and a readymade presentation format. Our June presentation was held at this site and was a great success. Upcoming, we've rescheduled our Fish & Game presentation and look forward to Ben English's railroading presentation. Please see the information on these events below.

Event Recap—History of the AMC Presentation

On Wednesday, June 16, 2021, a nice size audience listened to Becky Fullerton, the AMC's Archivist, as she told us of the history of the AMC. She took us from the start of the idea for the organization right up to current times. It was a great presentation. There was a good Q&A session following the presentation and people were really happy to be back to an in-person presentation. Thanks again to the folks at the Union Congregational Church for the use of their church.



Upcoming Presentations:



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Monday, August 9, 2021—Rescheduled from April 2021!—"NH Fish & Game—The History Behind This State Department" with Lt. Alex Lopashanski

This presentation was originally scheduled for April 2021 but needed to be cancelled with short notice due to the virus. We have rescheduled the program for Monday, August 9, 2021.

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 to life for us! Union Congregational Church Sanctuary, Route 302 and Albany Avenue, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 20: "A Century of Railroading in Crawford Notch" with Ben English

⇒ **Please note the date of this event has been corrected from our last newsletter**

From the 1860s to the late 1950s, 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.



Union Congregational Church Sanctuary, Route 302 and Albany Avenue, Time: 7:00 p.m.

All of our programs are open to the public. There is no charge for attending our presentations but we gratefully accept donations at the door. All donations are directed to our Bartlett History Museum project for the renovation of the former St. Joseph Church building.

Please join us for these interesting presentations.

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Hattie Evans and the Evans Family

by Phil Franklin

This is the story of an incredible women, Hattie Evans, and her family. I had the wonderful opportunity to meet with Gary Kezerian, Wayne Ruggles and Vernon Evans, three of Hattie's ten grandchildren. They told the story of their grandmother and parents who lived in a house literally just a few feet off of the tracks of the Maine Central Railroad in Crawford Notch. The railroad is an essential part of this story but nowhere near as important as the story of this family. The history of the Evans family should not be allowed to fade into the fog of time, rather, it should stand as an example of a family who made the best of what they had while living in a unique setting in Hart's Location.

One might think Hattie's story and that of her family would be one of loneliness and isolation, living in a house that was miles from the nearest neighbor, with no electricity or telephone, and being dependent on the support of the railroad to make a living. It was actually just the opposite. Hattie and her husband, Loring, willingly accepted this life. Their children grew up knowing no other way and, as a result, their nuclear family developed very close bonds that have grown throughout their extended family. Today, as the family members spread out across the country, they still keep in touch, and while reunions aren't as frequent, the cousins still remember their roots. This is the story about a family who learned the value of loving and caring for one another, who suffered tragic loss and grew stronger as a result, and who saw the strength of their mother, Hattie, "Mum" to them, "Grammie Evans" to the grandchildren, as a guiding light in their youth and adulthood.



Hattie Evans
About 1915

A Step Back in Time

In 1875, the Portland and Ogdensburg Railroad opened the rail line that traveled through Crawford Notch. Constructing this approximately twelve-mile section of track was a monumental feat given the steep grade, the hand and dynamite work needed to cut through the tough granite, and the need to construct two large trestles, Frankenstein and Willey Brook. This rail line would connect Portland, Maine with lands to the north and west of the "White Hills," as they were called in that era. The track through the notch was divided into "sections." Section foremen were responsible for the maintenance of tracks in their given section. Track section 129 was the last section of track as the trains reached the top of the notch coming from Bartlett. It was considered the steepest and most difficult section to maintain. The section foreman in 1875 was James E. Mitchell. He and his family lived in a small "section house" right next to the tracks, mile marker 84, near the top of Crawford Notch.

In 1887, the Maine Central Railroad began its takeover of the bankrupt Portland and Ogdensburg line through the Notch. In 1888, Foreman Mitchell announced his intention to resign but the Maine Central Railroad enticed him to stay on by building a new, larger section house further down the tracks in the notch – still on section 129 and still right next to the tracks. This house would be the living quarters for the section foreman and his family as well as the track workers on his crew. The "Mount Willard Section House," as it was known, was at the foot of Mount Willard, an imposing rock face above Route 302, which looms large as one drives westward heading out of Crawford Notch into Bretton Woods. Today, the top of the mountain is an often sought after hiking destination with the trail starting behind the Crawford Station. Hikers reaching the mountain top are rewarded with a commanding view down the length of Crawford Notch.

Mitchell and his family lived in this new section house until 1898 when he finally retired and was replaced by Joseph Monahan. Monahan and his family lived in the Mount Willard Section House until 1903 when he was reassigned as the foreman of track section 128 (the section where the Willey house was located). Loring Evans replaced Monahan as the section 129 foreman. He and Hattie moved into the Mount Willard Section House in 1903. This begins a story that we still talk about today.



Loring Evans & Crew by Mt.
Willard Section House

Hattie and Loring were now living in a remote section of Hart's Location. Loring was dedicated to his railroad job as well as his family. Hattie was equally dedicated to supporting her family and the railroad crew boarding at her house. In many ways, her spirit and dedication to raising her family while caring for the railroad crew are to be admired for she was successful at both endeavors.

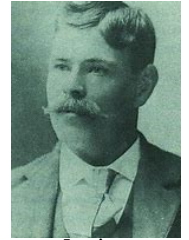
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Hattie Smith & Loring Evans



Hattie Evans
with her cat

Hattie F. Smith was born on February 17, 1872, in Standish, Maine. According to Virginia Downs in her book, *Life by the Tracks*, Hattie had a “stern upbringing” under the direction of her step-father. She worked as a housekeeper beginning at the age of twelve. She would carry this strong work ethic, learned at an early age, for the rest of her life. Hattie never really knew her father, George Smith, a railroad engineer as he was killed in the explosion of a steam engine boiler in 1873 when Hattie was only a year old.



Loring
Evans

Loring S. Evans was born on October 31, 1873, in Raymond, Maine. Loring’s father, John Evans, was a farmer and Civil War veteran. Loring made his living working for the Maine Central Railroad as a track worker. He had been offered a job as section foreman once but turned it down; that was before he was married to Hattie. Upon the second offering of the foreman’s position, he accepted it; by then he was married to Hattie.

Standish and Raymond are two towns separated only by a few miles along the shore of Maine’s Sebago Lake. Being close in proximity, the Smith and Evans families knew each other. In 1897, Hattie and Loring married. Starting his new position as the Mount Willard Section Foreman in the summer of 1903, Loring received \$1.75 per day, worked six days per week and oversaw a crew of four men. As with the previous section foremen, Loring was also given the benefit of living in the Mount Willard Section House. Living in this house meant Hattie had responsibilities also. Being no stranger to hard work, Hattie cleaned the house, did laundry for the workers, herself and Loring, went on fishing, hunting and hiking treks with Loring, and cooked for the rail workers. She also made this remote mountain cliff house a home as she planted her flower garden and decorated the house. She raised chickens and pigs. She tried to grow a vegetable garden but that proved to be food for the deer and rabbits. From the stories that are told of Hattie and Loring, they were a close couple.



Raymond Mildred
Gordon Enola

Children Bless the Evans Family

In 1907, the Evans were blessed with their first child, Gordon. When it came time for his birth, a telegraph message was sent to North Conway and Dr. George Horsley Shedd was transported by steam engine to the Evans house to deliver the baby. Hattie and Loring had three other children. Mildred “Millie” Evans (Robinson) was born in 1908, Raymond was born in 1909 and Enola “Nola” Evans (Ruggles) was born in 1911.



Raymond, Enola, Gordon,
Mildred 1968 Last House Visit

All of the children were born in the house on the tracks under the care of Dr. Shedd with one exception. While Enola was born in the house, Dr. Shedd didn’t arrive in time for her birth. Hattie gave birth to Enola by herself. Hattie was known to have a dry sense of humor and that characteristic came out in the naming of the Evans’ fourth child. Using the circumstances of the child’s birth, being alone, Hattie apparently decided to create a name by spelling ALONE backwards – Enola.

Tragedy on the Tracks

When Hattie married Loring, she was pleased that he was a track worker thinking he had a “safe” job given the nature of her father’s death. Still, railroad work was notoriously hard and dangerous regardless of your job. The track crews were responsible for keeping the rail lines passable at all times. Being in the mountains, early snow storms were a normal occurrence. Snow was cleared from the tracks by giant plows pushed by steam engines but the track crews needed to clear the switches to keep the rail operation moving. On Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1913, while clearing the snow from a major storm, a west bound freight train came up out of Crawford Notch to the Crawford Yard (just east of today’s Crawford Station) where Loring and his crew were shoveling snow. The freight train was being pushed by a “helper engine” at the back of the train. Having a helper engine pushing while the main engine at the front of the train was pulling was a normal occurrence on the steep Crawford Notch grade. These heavy trains needed the additional power of one, and at times two, additional engines to push them out of the notch.

As the train passed the snow shoveling track crew, Loring apparently thought the helper engine was continuing westward with the freight train to Fabyans (today called Fabyan). Instead, the helper reversed direction and started heading back to Bartlett. In the process, Loring was struck by the engine and tender and killed instantly. At the age of 41 years old, Hattie Evans suddenly became a widow with four small children living in the far reaches of Crawford Notch. She was informed of Loring’s death by family friend, Joe Monahan.

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Hattie Evans continued ...

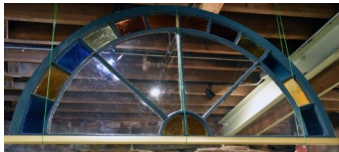
While understandably shaken by Loring's death, Hattie's spirit and drive would not allow her to retreat from the duties she had performed for the railroad and men boarding in the section house for the past ten years. Rather than pack up her family and leave the mountains, Hattie decided to stay in the Mount Willard Section House to raise her family and continue to support the railroad workers who boarded in the house. Railroad worker John Green, took over as section foreman and would be a lifelong friend to the Evans family.

The Mount Willard Section House

The "Mount Willard Section House" is an important part of this story for it was a landmark in the area and, more importantly, it was a home that by its unique setting, helped the Evans family grow together and support one another. The two-story house with its grey clapboards and green trim must have made visitors to the area wonder who lived there and how you got to the house. For those who remember seeing the house perched between the tracks and the edge of the cliff below Mount Willard, it's a memory that is not forgotten. From *Life on the Tracks*, we learn that the "homestead was constructed of sturdy hardwood ... The rooms were spacious and airy, bay windows on the track and valley sides flooded the house with light." The house plans for this building, dated October 12, 1888, were donated to the Bartlett Historical Society by the grandchildren of Hattie Evans.

The floor plan for this 1,900 square foot house shows a basement that had a stone wall foundation and utilitarian features, such as the coal bin and stove, a large water tank, and a second furnace. The first floor had a large kitchen with a coal stove and pantry, a dining room, a bedroom and parlor. The Chamber Floor or second floor was divided into four large bedrooms. The trackside windows were covered with heavy screening to protect the glass from rocks that mixed with the snow as it was thrown from the tracks by the rail plows. Two staircases were at opposite ends of the house with one providing access to all three levels of the house. All of the rooms were heated, with the exception of the kitchen and a basement room for the coal bin. The front porch faced the tracks. From photographs of the building, it was a beautiful structure that rivals many of the new houses built today.

The house stood proudly on the mountain's edge for 85 years. With all of her children married and moved on to their own homes, Hattie Evans finally left the house in 1941 after section foreman John Green retired. As the house stood empty, vandals started making the house their target and unauthorized people started using it for overnight accommodations. Attempts to secure the house all failed. In 1968, the railroad decided to burn the house but the thought that a scenic tourist railroad might once again bring trains over the rails in front of the house put the burn order on hold. Vandalism and unauthorized use of the building continued. On December 13, 1972, after a good snow storm, the railroad burned the house to the ground.

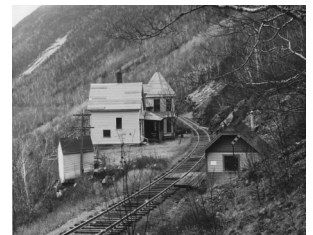


Stained Glass Window from
Section House

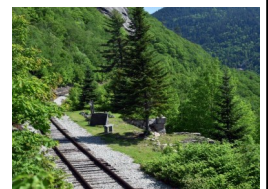
In September 1968, the four Evans children made one last visit to their childhood home. Before the house was burned, the railroad gave Raymond permission to remove the semi-circle shaped stained glass window from the west side of the building. That window plus a couple of other artifacts are the only know items that remain from the old house. The window and other artifacts, including a scale model of the

house, are on display at the Littleton Historical Society Museum in Littleton, NH.

Today, the homestead is marked by a large granite monument showing an etching of the house and mountains, and noting the names of the Evans family members who lived there. The stone foundation marks the location of the house. Additionally, some pipes that were presumably part of the heating system, and the rusted old furnace are all that remain. The flag pole, ice house and another rail car barn are gone. Hattie's garden is still maintained and planted with new flowers annually by her grandchildren and great grandchildren. Two large pine trees stand tall at the site, reminders of the sturdy house that was once stood there. Riders on the Conway Scenic Railroad's Mountaineer train ride can see the homestead site. However, railroad officials maintain that it is illegal and dangerous for people to walk to the site on the railroad tracks. ... continued on next page



Evans House by the tracks;
ice house foreground (L); rail
car barn (R)



Evans Homesite Today

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Hattie Evans continued ...

The Railroad is the Lifeline

Living with your house only a few feet from the railroad tracks and trains moving by on a daily basis presented a different way of living than nearly any of us have experienced. Some examples will illustrate this point.

The railroad workers were like family members in some ways. They ate in the kitchen of the house and were served dinner before the family (the family ate in the dining room). Hattie had the crew's lunches ready for them as they went off to work each morning. The workers slept in a room on the second floor of the house. After the passing of their father, the workers, especially John Green, became surrogate fathers to the children, especially the boys.

Workers made different toys for the children and taught them how to hunt. Eventually, the boys worked on the track crew for a while. Just before winter, the workers slaughtered the pigs that Hattie raised and stored the meat in the ice house along with venison taken in hunting expeditions in the area. They also showed a great deal of respect for Hattie, minding their language around her and never abusing their privileges in the house.



Mount Willard Section House

To get to the Evans house, people either walked the railroad tracks from Crawford Yard, climbed a steep footpath from a spot on Route 302 where John Green had a garage for his car or used the trains. Groceries were ordered via a telegraphed message to stores in Bartlett (likely the G. K. Howard General Store) and carried up the footpath or, after being delivered to Crawford station via a passenger train, they were placed on the front platform of a train engine and dropped off by the rail workers or workers would bring them to the house via a handrail car. Coal to heat the house was supplied by the railroad. It was loaded into a basement coal bin via a chute coming through the foundation. Water for the house came from a mountain brook from spring through fall. Before winter came, they would fill the one-thousand gallon water tank in the basement of the house and when that needed refilling in the winter, a steam engine would stop to fill the tank from the engine's tender. When going away for a Sunday break, for safekeeping, Hattie would place her valuables in a culvert that was just west of the house. That culvert is still there today.

The family got to know the different engineers and conductors on the trains by the sound of the train coming along the tracks. Some engineers pushed their engines hard while others knew how to get their trains up the grade in an easier manner. Different engineers also had unique patterns in blowing the train's steam whistle. At Christmas, the train crews dropped off bags of hard candies and nuts for the family. The train crews watched out for the family and were in many ways a part of Evans family life.

While this lifestyle may seem hard, it was business as usual to the Evans family.

Going to School, Child's Play and Friends

The children went to grade school in either the Bemis School that was located on the grounds of today's Notchland Inn, about ten miles east on the tracks, or at the Fabyan School, about 10 miles west on the tracks. They were occasionally transported to Bemis School by Mr. Charles Morey, the owner of the property on which the school was located. But they also were transported by the train when heading to Fabyans. Here's the catch, the train didn't stop at the Evans house. Hattie positioned the children about 40 feet apart along the tracks and the conductor would literally lean out and pick each one up as the train rolled by. Forty foot spacing was enough distance to collect one child, get them on the train and be ready to pick up the next child. When neither school was available, a teacher would be brought to the house by train along with the Monahan girls who lived in the section house down the tracks. High school was in Bartlett, Twin Mountain and Whitefield with the children often boarding at different houses in the town of their schools, a common occurrence for children whose families lived on the rail lines.

The children used their surroundings for entertainment. They played along and on the tracks but always needed to be mindful of oncoming trains. In the winter, they fashioned a ski and sliding slope in the mountain side above their house; In warmer weather, baseball was played at the homestead with home plate being a rock by the porch; hiking adventures were common; even things such as trying to push over dead trees or boulders down the slope below their house and tracks were sources of entertainment. The kids had a three wheel cart that they rode up and down the tracks. When they were older, the boys would walk up the tracks to work at the Crawford House hotel or the golf course in Bretton Woods. Raymond once caddied for President Warren G. Harding while working at the Crawford House.

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Hattie Evans continued ...



Evans Children; Enola (2nd left) tethered to the porch post

"Play dates" for the children were arranged with the Monahan family who lived down the tracks near the area that is today the beginning of the Arethusa Falls hiking trail. Again, a train ride between the Evans and Monahan houses united the children.

Safety when living this close to the tracks was important. When the children were young, Hattie would tie a rope around their waists and to the flag pole or a front porch post so they couldn't run on to the tracks. Being by herself, she needed to be sure everyone was safe. While this may seem extreme by current standards, Hattie did what she needed to do to protect her children.

"The Indomitable Hattie"

In her book, *Life by the Tracks*, Virginia Downs titled the first chapter "The Indomitable Hattie" and for good reason. Hattie was a woman who worked hard all of her life. While living on the tracks, she cared for her growing family and a crew of railroad roughnecks. She was responsible for all aspects of the household starting early in the morning and working until later in the evening, from preparing meals and washing clothes to doing the paperwork for the railroad.

The children all grew up with a list of chores to do around the house. For Enola and Mildred, chores such as changing the bedding, cleaning the gaslight chimneys and cleaning the carpets were standard fare. Gordon and Raymond got the most of the outside chores such as collecting the chicken eggs, cleaning the henhouse, and cleaning out the ashes from the stoves, and, in the spring, spading Hattie's heart shaped flower garden. All the while, Hattie would be constantly working around the house.

Hattie spent a lot of time hiking in the mountains with Loring and then with her children. Sometimes these hiking trips would be hunting expeditions and other times just to get out for a while. Hattie was not shy about using a gun. She is credited with being the first women in New Hampshire to shoot a Canadian lynx on July 29, 1929. The story goes that this lynx had been seen in the area by the railroad workers. Hattie spotted the big cat perched on a cliff above her house. According to grandson, Wayne Ruggles (and others) her first and second shots missed but the third shot brought the animal down. She received a \$20.00 bounty for her prize shot.

Being responsible for all of the household operations, Hattie had daily and weekly routines. Each was designed to keep things running efficiently. Meals were prepared in an orderly way with breakfast being readied the night before; Monday was clothes washing day and washed items were hung to dry in a certain order; the American flag was raised every day at dawn and lowered at sunset. In *Life by the Tracks*, Raymond's wife, Connie says of Hattie, "You never heard her complain once about the routine. She just went calmly, slowly, her way and everything got done. I never saw her flustered." With all of her routines and daily chores, she still managed to take a moment to observe the world around her. Again, from *Life by the Tracks*, her son Gordon notes, "As busy as she was, my mother found time to enjoy the view she had from her kitchen. She would look out the window, watching the way the light would fall on the mountains at different times of the day, remarking how the sun would reach various places depending on the season." And, what a view it was, looking down the beautiful Crawford Notch.



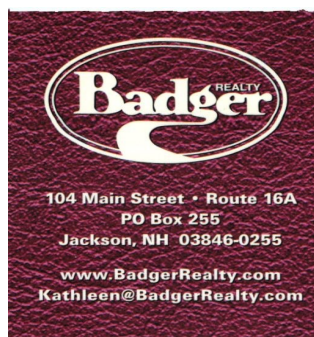
Hattie and her Lynx

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Hattie Evans continued ...

When the trains traveled by the house, the children would be out by the tracks waving to the passengers or rail crews. Hattie, on the other hand, would be quietly behind them, not wanting to be in the forefront or attracting attention. She always dressed very neatly, wearing an apron to catch anything that might soil her dress. When the trains passed, if her apron was soiled, she would roll up it up so no one would see anything amiss. Even years later after leaving the mountain house, Hattie would dress with a hat and gloves just to go shopping. Likewise, she always made sure her children were dressed in their best clothes for a Sunday outing. This included a tie and clean shirt with dress pants for the boys and a dress for the girls.

It shouldn't be a surprise that Hattie was described as a frugal person. Her grandchildren noted how she would make things last by, for example, reversing the worn collar of a shirt to extend its useful life or cutting the worn part of a bedsheet out and patching it with another good portion of another sheet. Living on a tight budget, Hattie learned to be creative with every penny. Yet, Hattie was a generous person extending kindness to hobos who happened by or the soldiers who guarded the Mount Willard Brook Trestle during World War I.

From everything we've learned about Hattie Evans, it can easily be said that she was an independent, indomitable person. Dwight Smith, North Conway's legendary railroad historian and a founding partner of the Conway Scenic Railroad, placed the name "Hattie Evans" on one of his restored passenger train cars to commemorate her memory. Certainly, she's one of the unforgettable characters of the White Mountains.

Leaving the Mount Willard Section House

As the Evans children grew up, married and moved on, Hattie quietly expressed a sense of loneliness living more and more by herself. Still, the children and grandchildren made it a point of returning to visit Hattie on Sundays. Their close family bonds remained important and nothing stood in the path of their weekly reunions.

Hattie's children became successful in their own lives. Gordon and his wife Helen had a daughter, Eleanor. Gordon graduated from Whitefield High School and Gray's Business School. He was a veteran of the US Army serving in WWII. He worked for Farley Glass Company and Soule Glass Company of Portland, Maine. He died in 1999. Mildred married Stillman Robinson. They had three children, Ann, Craig and Lynn. She became a school teacher. She died in 1996. Raymond and his wife Connie had three children, Vernon, Gene and Brian. Raymond was also a WWII US Army veteran attached to the Mountain Division serving as a sniper instructor. He received a lifetime membership in the Appalachian Mountain Club for his many years of maintaining hiking trails. Raymond was employed by the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department and the White Mountain Fish Hatchery. He died in 2001. Enola married Vonley Ruggles. They had three children, Linda, Gary and Wayne. Enola died in 1969.

In 1941, when family friend and her last boarder, John Green, retired and moved on, Hattie also moved on from the house where she had raised four children and created a lifetime of memories. She went to live very briefly with her daughter Enola and her husband, in Littleton, New Hampshire. From there she moved to Portland, Maine to live with her daughter Mildred and her husband.

While living in Maine, Hattie's spirit and drive to keep active never stopped. She went to work for the B&M Bean Company picking over beans on the assembly line (at age 70); she worked at the fish pier with her own knife and file cutting up fish, and at one point, she provided daycare for a family watching their children while the parents worked. Busy and active to the end, Hattie Evans lived a remarkable life. On June 14, 1954, Hattie died in Portland, Maine at the age of 82 years old.

Final Thoughts

We've covered a lot of ground in this story and yet, we've only scratched the surface. In my conversations with Hattie's grandchildren, we've talked about the iconic house on the tracks in Crawford Notch that now exists only as a foundation; we've learned about the life of an incredible, determined lady, Hattie Evans, who despite the loss of her husband persevered to become an unintentionally legendary figure in our local history; we've witnessed the enduring bond that exists still today in a family whose humble beginnings started with two very hard working people who created a loving home by the tracks. In a recent conversation with Gary Kezerian and Wayne Ruggles you could see the pride in their eyes as they talked about their family. The enduring part of this story, regardless of everything else, is the *family*, the bonds that keep them together and the ever present memory of Grammie Evans.

I would like to thank Gary, Wayne and Vernon for sharing their family story with me. I'd also like to thank the many people my wife and I met on a recent visit to the Littleton Historical Society Museum for their warm welcome and time they took to talk about their Evans family exhibit and the other displays in their museum.



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

The Historical Herald

www.BartlettHistory.Org

Facebook: Bartlett Historical-Society

15th Anniversary for BHS!

Let's step back to the very beginning of BHS for a few moments. The years 2005 and 2006 were formative ones with meetings being arranged to attract people to participate, filings with the state of NH to obtain non-profit status, the search for a BHS "home" and establishment of different administrative and historical exploration committees. Formation documents with varying dates declare the historical society to be in existence but we have settled on the date of May 16, 2006 as the starting date because this is the date our charter with the state of NH, Department of State was reinstated. At least one, and possibly two previous efforts, to form a historical society failed to gain traction. Still, the idea for a historical society was never lost completely.



In 2006, Leslie Mallett, then BHS President, wrote a year end summary of that year's activities. Highlights include the announcement that the Morrell family (founders of Story Land) provided a small chalet in the Linderhof area for our temporary office and museum; a new BHS website was established; a program titled "Life, Legends and Lore—Village Voices" was established to capture the oral histories of town residents (Donald Clemons, James Howard, James Clemons and Ben Howard were the first to be interviewed); Ben English kicked off our first historic topic presentation with a review of railroad history in the area; and, a project was underway to map family names in Bartlett Village to an 1896 map and 1900 census.

Early committees focused on the collection of genealogies of local families, the location and mapping of town and private cemeteries, the organization of "data" being donated to the society and the establishment of an ongoing historical presentation program. Other committees were formed in following years.

Most importantly, dedicated people made this historical society a reality. They include our first board of directors in 2006 (and founding members), Leslie Mallett, President; Bert George, Vice President; Linda Chisholm, Secretary; Jean Gustin, Treasurer; and, Kathi McGraw, Director at Large. Frank Siek was our accountant. With this leadership team, BHS was off and running. We'll have more on our own history in the fall newsletter.

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