

BHS Curator's Report – Summer 2025

by Kathy Howard

Welcome to the first edition of the Curator's Column. Going forward, I hope to use this column to highlight new additions and/or changes to our collections.

What is a curator? A curator is a person in charge of a museum, art collection, or similar institution, responsible for managing and overseeing collections. Curators catalog new additions to the collection, maintain and repair existing items, conduct research to understand the collection, and organize exhibitions. They also play a role in research, education and public outreach related to the collection.

Prior to the opening of the Museum, items owned by BHS were scattered in member homes, garages, and barns. Some of the BHS collection was stored in the chalet on Linderhof Str. in Glen as well as in storage units at the Glen Warehouse. My "appointment" as curator in 2008 came about due to my career in academic and research libraries and probably because nobody else wanted the job! BHS had recently purchased the PastPerfect Museum software and wanted someone to start organizing and cataloging what was stored in the Linderhof chalet. Over the next 16 years, I tried to maintain some kind of order for what we had already accumulated and whatever new items were donated. Late summer of 2024, we began to move items into the new Museum space. Close to 900 previously cataloged items were inventoried. Items which had not been cataloged were set aside for later addition to the database. First priority at that time was assembling our displays for the Museum opening in October.

Once the displays were set up and Museum opened, the "fun" job of exploring what was in those boxes, bins, crates, and bags which had been set aside during the move began. Over 300 items have been cataloged since the opening of the Museum.

Listing all the items that have been donated or cataloged since the Museum opening would take an entire newsletter but notable, interesting, or strange items include:

- A Livestock & Cattle Self-Watering Push Paddle Bowl Water trough (probably the item with the longest description)
- 1816 Bridge Authorization from the state of New Hampshire to the Town of Bartlett to construct a bridge across the Saco River
- Edmund Sawyer military commission - issued October 18, 1797. Appoints Edmund Sawyer to Lieutenant of the Fourth Company in the Twenty-First Regiment of Militia in New Hampshire.
- A collection of original documents (183?) issued to or by Daniel D. Carlton and/or family including deeds, receipts, judgment notes, juror notices, references for teaching, tax bill
- Wooden snowshoes, a handmade wooden backpack, and a wooden wagon jack. A collection of Bartlett Bicentennial souvenir items. The original signs for the Bartlett Hotel and the St. Joseph Church. A collection of glass Bartlett souvenir items. Hundreds of postcard greeting cards. Jordan Marsh merchandise catalogs from 1894-95. Numerous maps, prints, paintings, school documents and student photographs.

The list goes on....

As mentioned, PastPerfect is our tool for cataloging and organizing the collection. This commercial database is in use in over 12,000 museums, libraries, and historical societies worldwide. BHS is currently working with PastPerfect to convert our holdings to a web version which will eventually (coming this summer!) be available online for anyone to search. Photos of items can be uploaded to catalog records so that users can also see the items as well as read about them. Another component of PastPerfect is the "People Biographies" section which allows us to create mini biographies of Bartlett people based on BHS and Ancestry.com information as well as from other genealogical online sources. We currently have over 10,000 records in the People Biographies. In collaboration with the Bartlett Public Library, we will continue to catalog historical items held at BPL and add these records into our database so that there is one combined database of historical items related to Bartlett searchable online.

We are always looking for new additions to the collection. If you have any items that are Bartlett, Hart's Location, Livermore, or White Mountain history related please consider donating them to our collection. Consider a donation as doing your part to preserve our local history!