

The Historical Herald

The Quarterly Newsletter of



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

PO Box 514, 13 School Street
Bartlett, NH 03812

www.BartlettHistory.org

Summer 2025 Edition (2025:3)

The Bartlett

Historical Society

New Hampshire Preservation Alliance 2025 Preservation Achievement Award

On June 11th, the Bartlett Historical Society was honored by the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance as one of their **2025 Preservation Achievement Award** winners. This award, given annually, “recognizes individuals, organizations, and businesses whose work has benefited our state’s historic resources.” (NHPA website). It highlights the efforts of BHS to save, renovate, and adapt the former St. Joseph Church building in Bartlett, to become the *Bartlett Historical Society & Museum*.

This former church, listed on the State Register of Historic Places in 2018 by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, was the first Catholic church in the Mount Washington Valley. After an extensive renovation, the building was saved and reopened in October 2024 in a new life as the BHS headquarters and museum for the display of the history of Bartlett, Hart’s Location, and Livermore.

In 2017, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance recognized the historical society’s building as one of their **Seven to Save** award winners. The “*Seven to Save* program has helped attract attention and resources to irreplaceable landmarks around the state that are under-used or threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, or unsympathetic development.” (NHPA website). The 2025 Preservation Achievement Award is a bookend to the Seven to Save award.

In accepting the award for BHS, Phil Franklin, BHS President, has dedicated the award to the 600 plus donors and professionals who helped make this great achievement possible. For it is only with their support that the success of this project was made possible.



Jennifer Goodman, NH Preservation Alliance, Executive Director, presents 2025 Preservation Achievement Award to BHS President, Phil Franklin (center) and BHS Treasurer, Sue Franklin; Not pictured BHS Curator, Kathy Howard, also representing BHS at the award ceremony. Photo by Steve Booth

BHS Donors (03/24/2025—07/12/2025)

Thank you to all of our donors for their support of BHS

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President's Message

Summer's here and so are the black fly! Hopefully they go away soon. Activity at BHS has been nonstop. Since our last newsletter, we've changed our museum exhibits, hosted three interesting presentations, finalized plans for our October presentation, rescheduled our "Old House History" workshop, and continued researching our local history. We continue to live our mission of preserving the history of our area and sharing that history with others.

The big news, as you read on the cover page, is that we were honored by the NH Preservation Alliance as one of the recipients of the *2025 Preservation Achievement Award* for our work to save, renovate, and adapt the former St. Joseph Church building in Bartlett as our new museum and headquarters. While the award recognizes the Historical Society, our receipt of the award would not have been possible without the dedicated support of all our donors over the years of the campaign and renovation work. This is why I have dedicated this award to our 600 plus museum donors. This award is for you.

Our museum continues to the place to be. Visitors continue to be impressed with the different displays. Our displays have brought back memories for many visitors while others have learned something new in what they've seen. We've heard many stories of childhood visits to the White Mountains, memories of past parishioners revisiting "their church," and surprise from many folks who were just curious to see our museum and found much more than they expected.

I'm hearing very positive comments from visitors to the museum and people with whom I meet as I represent BHS. Comments such as "We've heard a lot of good things about what your historical society is doing" is greatly appreciated. This type of attention has helped us join in partnership with other organizations to expand their understanding of their part in local history. Partnerships with the Saco Valley Gem and Mineral Club plus the Conway Scenic Railroad have helped us broaden our historical view.

On July Fourth, we welcomed visitors into the building for our usual open house. This time, they were the first to see our new and expanded exhibits. The new geological history and expanded railroad displays drew a lot of attention. Thank you to Kathy Howard, our Curator, and Sue Franklin, our Treasurer, for their work in assembling these displays.

Donations to BHS have continued to arrive and we thank every donor for their support. Your support allows us to not only pay our standard operational expenses but also gives us the opportunity to seek out interesting presentation speakers, acquire local historical artifacts that are not donated to us, and help preserve or restore artifacts that we have in our possession. We've also received many "new" artifacts telling pieces of our local history. We are always looking to expand our collection of artifacts relevant to the history of Bartlett, Hart's Location, and Livermore. These items both help solve mysteries and create new ones, and all are treasured.

We had another very successful membership drive in 2025 but just a reminder to anyone who has not renewed their membership or still wants to join as a new member, we accept memberships at any time throughout the year. Thank you to those who have renewed or joined.

Finally, on behalf of our BHS Board of Directors and myself, I would like to thank everyone for their continued support of BHS. If you have any questions, comments or ideas about BHS or Bartlett, Hart's Location or Livermore history, please let me know by dropping me an email at Phil@BartlettHistory.org. Thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Phil Franklin

President, Bartlett Historical Society

A color version of this newsletter is available on our website at www.BartlettHistory.org.

The Historical Herald by Email? If you would like to receive your BHS newsletter via your email, please let us know by dropping us an email at BartlettHistoryNH@gmail.com

BHS Notes

Thank You to our Volunteers

In past newsletters, we've posted a "Help Wanted" section. We are looking to develop an active volunteer program within BHS. Five volunteers who are actively helping us are Sue Chula, Gale Mender, Diana Levy, Mary Nudd, and Patty Belcik. We extend our sincere appreciation to each volunteer for their support.

- ◆ Sue Chula is our Recording Secretary and video recorder for our presentations. A major part of her work is typing the minutes from BHS Board meeting recordings.
- ◆ Gale is helping us with some of our administrative tasks in the museum as well as being a major contributor to our research project to identify and record the names of all the past town officials dating back to 1790.
- ◆ Diana completed a project to develop a detailed inventory of all of the books in our historical library. This was a big project that helped us have a more complete index of our book inventory. She is now working on another project focused on developing a complete inventory of our collection of Bartlett and Hart's Location Annual Reports.
- ◆ Mary recently started helping cover museum hours for us. In doing this, she is helping open and close the museum as well as greeting visitors, and answering their questions
- ◆ Patty is a local landscape artist. She has been caring for our flower bed plantings in front of the museum. The colors are the best we've ever had to welcome visitors into the museum.

⇒ Searching for a Volunteer to do Video Editing – We are searching for someone who has video editing skills. We have many recordings for the BHS YouTube channel but they need editing before we can release them. Please let us know if you can help with this special skill.



If you would like to become a BHS volunteer, please let us know by stopping by the museum or dropping a note to Phil Franklin at Phil@BartlettHistory.org.

BHS Projects Underway

We have a few projects underway in our museum.

- ◆ Combing Past Newspapers for Bartlett News: History is recorded every day in our local newspaper, the Conway Daily Sun. For several years, we have collected articles related to Bartlett, Hart's Location, and Livermore but there are many editions in past years that we did not review. Scotty Mallett, a BHS Board member, has undertaken a project to look through many past editions of the Sun to pull out articles about activities and events in the three towns in our focus along with news about the people from our community. We will archive these articles for future reference.
- ◆ Cataloging BHS Artifacts: Our Curator, Kathy Howard, is continuing to work through a significant backload of artifacts that need to be cataloged in our PastPerfect database. She has more on this topic in her Curator's Column in this newsletter.
- ◆ BHS Museum Catalog Online: Kathy is also continuing to work to broaden your access to our museum by getting our BHS Museum Catalog installed online with a software tool called "PastPerfect." While this project has taken longer than expected, we have completed steps working with the PastPerfect company to get us closer to the online catalog.
- ◆ Record of Town Officials: We are continuing to work on our project to record all the names and positions of our town officials dating back to 1790. One of our volunteers, Gale Mendor, has been working on this task. Our primary source of information is old town reports. Two things make this challenging – 1. Over the years, the reports vary in format so each page of the report needs to be reviewed for information, and, 2. We only have reports dating back to the early 1880s (and some years leading to today are missing also). We are not sure when the printing of the town reports started but looking through our records plus records from the NH Historical Society, 1881 seems to be the cut off point for paper town reports. Still, we have other sources that will take time to review.

BHS Partnerships with Local Organizations

In our redesign of our museum exhibits, we have been partnering with two local organizations, the Saco Valley Gem and Mineral Club, and the Conway Scenic Railroad.

Saco Valley Gem and Mineral Club – Our relationship with the Saco Valley Gem and Mineral Club started when one of our members, Buzz Query, spotted our giant, 128-pound, smokey quartz in our museum. Together, we developed the idea of creating an exhibit focused on our geological history. Club members helped us gather a small collection of different minerals and gems found here in Bartlett as well as other mining related items. David Shedd, another BHS member, though not affiliated with the club, added to our exhibit by sharing his knowledge of our area geology as well as offering bedrock maps and a beautiful quartz specimen for our display.



Conway Scenic Railroad – Rob Owen, a BHS member and historian for the Conway Scenic Railroad invited us to work with the railroad on their 150th anniversary celebration of the laying of the railroad tracks through Bartlett and Crawford Notch. As a part of this celebration, BHS is hosting two presentations on the history of the Portland and Ogdensburg Railroad and on the area's rail service with the Maine Central Railroad. In addition to hosting these presentations, we are also doing some research for CSRR on our local railroad history and expanding our existing railroad exhibit in the museum.



We are very pleased to have had the opportunity to work with these two organizations. Aside from helping BHS enhance our exhibits, these partnerships demonstrate a community spirit fostered by our commitment to our individual organizational missions and willingness to combine efforts to do positive things for the Valley. Our thanks to both the Saco Valley Gem and Mineral Club including David Shedd, as well as the Conway Scenic Railroad for working with BHS to expand on the historical knowledge in the community.

How Can You Donate to BHS?

There are several options:

Cash or Check; Credit Card; Gift-in-Kind; Stock Transfer, Matching Gift from your employer, Memorials, Estate Designations

Donations to BHS will help with our operational expenses as well as be used to help us research and preserve the history of Bartlett, Hart's Location, and Livermore, as well as offering different opportunities for people of all ages to learn about our rich history.

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 Quarterly Presentation Series News

The BHS Quarterly Presentation Series is a way for the Historical Society to offer informative presentations on topics of local interest and/or history. Some of these topics touch directly on our local or regional history while others highlight the experiences of local people in their life professions or experiences. If you have an idea for a topic that you'd like to see us pursue, please let us know.

Presentation Reviews

On Wednesday, April 16th, Steve Angers, owner of the North Country Angler shop provided a very interesting review of the history of fishing in our region. Going from a means of putting food on the table to more of a sporting activity today, Steve reviewed the evolution of this sport. He also gave some advice on where to fish, the best flies for fly fishing, and a commentary on the condition of our rivers and streams. We thank Steve for taking the time to enlighten us on the world of local fishing.



On Wednesday, June 18th, US Army 1st Lieutenant Karl Chandler gave a look inside his duty as an Aeromedical Evacuation Blackhawk Pilot during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He showed scenes and described his duties and equipment as a medical evacuation pilot as well as provided insight into the living conditions and people of Iraq. This was a very interesting firsthand perspective on a war that was distant from our homeland but very real to a Bartlett man who was there. We thank Karl for sharing his experiences with us.

What's Next

NEW!! Wednesday, October 15, 2025: Life at the Top with Eric Pinder, author and former Mount Washington Observatory Weather Observer

Mount Washington, "Home of the World's Worst Weather," is a place visited by many for an hour or so but Eric worked at the top of the mountain from 1995 to 2002 as a weather observer in the Mount Washington Observatory. His talk will cover many different aspects of life at the top of the mountain, from weather observing to favorite crew recipes. And, of course, the observatory cats.



Bartlett Historical Society & Museum, 13 School Street, Bartlett, Time: 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming BHS Event

A BHS Workshop—Rescheduled!

How to Research the History of Your Old House—with Andrew Cushing



This program, originally scheduled for April 2025, is now scheduled for **Saturday, August 9, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the Bartlett Historical Society & Museum, 13 School Street, Bartlett.** In this workshop, Andrew will talk about different ways to discover the history of your house. With many members owning older homes or having older homes in the family, this will be a great learning experience on how to research old deeds and find other clues to tell the story of your home. For seating purposes, if you are planning to attend, please let us know by sending an email to BHS at BartlettHistoryNH@gmail.com or leaving a message on our museum answering machine at 603-374-5037. Walk-ins are welcome also. There is no admission fee for this event but donations at the door will be greatly appreciated.

BHS Curator's Report—BHS Curator 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.

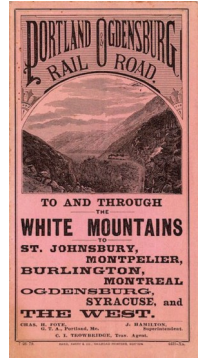
We are always looking for new additions to the collection. If you have any items that are Bartlett, Hart's Location, Livermore, or White Mountain history related please consider donating them to our collection. Consider a donation as doing your part to preserve our local history!

1870s – The Start of a New Era in Bartlett and Hart’s Location

by Phil Franklin

Note: Scotty Mallett provided much of the railroad history for this article. Our thanks to him for his research and sharing his knowledge.

From the late 1700s through the decade of 1860, Bartlett and Hart’s Location were quiet, small towns in Northern New Hampshire. Agriculture was the main focus of the inhabitants. People traveled by foot, horse, horse and carriage, or stagecoach. Outside of the mountains, in the 1800s, travel by rail was possible in many areas including around Boston and New York, through Connecticut to Vermont, and in Massachusetts but the White Hills, as they were known in those days, was a pocket where “modern” rail travel was non-existent. This one gap in the rail system was begging to be filled, and when it was, things changed in our White Hills.



When the Portland & Ogdensburg (P&O) Railroad laid the tracks through Bartlett and Hart’s Location/Crawford Notch in 1873 through 1875, connecting with the tracks for the Boston, Concord and Montreal Railroad coming in above the Notch from Vermont, a new era was started in the mountains. The story of the building of this portion of railroad tracks and the impact the new train service had on the area is worth noting.

The Beginnings of the Railroad Through the Notch

On February 11, 1868, the Maine legislature granted the P&O Railroad a charter to build a rail line between Portland and Fabyan (a village in the town of Carroll, NH at the top of Crawford Notch). The P&O already had tracks coming in from Vermont to Fabyan. Closing this gap would allow train service, passenger and freight, to travel from Portland to points in the mid-western United States as well as into Canada. Laying the tracks would become a significant engineering challenge, especially through Crawford Notch.

Brothers, Samuel and John Anderson, both from Portland, became key drivers in this construction project. The Anderson’s were quite accomplished and well positioned for the job ahead of them.



Samuel Anderson

Samuel Anderson, born December 11, 1824, was a graduate of Bowdoin College and Harvard University; he was the president of the P&O; as a lawyer he served as the Cumberland County (Maine) Attorney from 1856 to 1861; he held the rank of Brigadier General in the Maine State Militia from 1856 to 1860; he served as President and Surveyor of the Port of Portland Board of Trade; and was a representative for the city of Portland in the State Legislature.



John Anderson

John Anderson, born on July 22, 1823, was the Civil Engineer for the P&O. Over his career, he was the civil engineer for at least six other railroads. He was a member of the Maine State Board of Agriculture, helped establish the Maine Genealogical Recorder and Geological Society, and was active in the pursuit of Maine history.

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Planning and Approvals

In May 1868, a preliminary survey of a track route was completed. The rails would come north from Portland, turn west at Freyburg, Maine, and head through Crawford Notch to meet the existing Boston, Concord, and Montreal tracks coming in from Vermont in Fabyan. An estimated \$3,000,000 budget was proposed for the project. This budget included all the rails, building equipment, rolling stock (i.e., engines and train cars), and labor costs. Authorities in Maine had given their approval for the track construction but approval from New Hampshire was still pending.

On July 7, 1869, the state of New Hampshire authorized the P&O to continue construction through the state with certain provisions. Key among those provisions was that the railroad would pass through Crawford Notch (the town of Hart's Location). This put Bartlett in the bullseye for being a railroad hub because of its location at the base of Crawford Notch. The other provisions included a requirement to spend at least \$100,000 on the project in the state by July 1, 1873, that the tracks connect to the existing rails in Fabyan, and that the project be completed by January 1, 1888. All these provisions were acceptable to the P&O as most of them were in the original plans.

Construction Begins

Construction of the P&O railroad project started in Portland, ME on September 6, 1870. There apparently was no grand ceremony or ribbon cutting, the work just started near Portland's Sewall Street. Contractors for the construction of the tracks to Freyburg was a firm named Fuller and Harding. From Freyburg onward the firm of Wilson, Tenant, and Hogan handled the construction. The number of laborers involved in the project is unknown but must have been sizable.

By June 18, 1871, the tracks had reached Freyburg. To reach this point a considerable amount of work was required to properly grade the railbed for the tracks. This included filling or bridging gaps and cutting through hills. While this was a laborious task, it was nothing compared to what lay ahead in the New Hampshire mountains. The recommended standard grade for the average railbed is 1.5% pitch. At the top of Crawford Notch, the slope of the railbed would be 2.2%. While the difference between 1.5 and 2.2% may not sound like much, consider the weight of a 100-car freight train grinding its way up the tracks. The steeper the incline, the harder it is to ascend the grade. This is why "helper" engines were installed mid-train and at the end of trains to assist the lead engine in climbing the Crawford grade.

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100 Years Ago ...

From the 1925 Bartlett Annual Report:

Albert Johnson was paid a \$20 bounty "on a wild cat"

Maine Central Railroad paid the Bartlett Village Fire Precinct \$1,200 for water for steam engines

The Bartlett Street Department reported a 3 month charge of \$129 for 43 street lights

A steam heating system was installed in the Bartlett Village school according to the Superintendent's report



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On to North Conway

The P&O tracks reached North Conway on August 19, 1871. The initial P&O station included a small three stall roundhouse, a turntable, and a large rail car shed. The North Conway rail station was built in 1874. This station is still in use today as the heart of operations for the Conway Scenic Railroad.



In August 1871, the P&O project ran into financial problems and work was halted until May 1872. P&O stockholders stepped in to provide additional funding, possibly \$1,500,000, to continue the project (exact figures are unknown).

When work resumed in 1872, changes were made in the construction process. First, to better control the finances, work was done at a slower pace. Second, horses were replaced by oxen. In 1872, the horse population suffered from an epizootic (the animal form of a human epidemic). The virus killed off a large portion of the horse population in the area so the oxen became the beasts of burden for the project.

Bartlett is the Next Focus of Construction

The first few miles through Bartlett, the Intervale and Glen sections of town, provided relatively level ground for laying the railbed. There were streams and rivers to cross requiring iron bridges and grading but this was the easy part of the construction when compared to Crawford Notch. Station houses were built in both Glen and Intervale to accommodate passengers in both parts of town. Today, the Glen station, still in its original location, is now the home of a local ski club. The Intervale station was moved and is now a part of a residential home in the area.



Bartlett Village was the next destination for the tracks. From July 1872 to July 1873, a significant construction project was underway in the Village area. A new station house, a freight house, train car maintenance shops, a water tower, and roundhouse were built. Additionally, the main line track was constructed plus several sidings were also installed as Bartlett Village became the hub for the railroad due to its location at the base of Crawford Notch. In 1888 and 1889, when the Maine Central Railroad took over the railroad operation from the P&O, construction continued with a new six bay roundhouse being built, a turntable for the roundhouse, and several utility buildings. Today, the roundhouse is being preserved by the Roundhouse Preservation Society and is now only four bays wide. The turntable was removed in 1912. The roundhouse is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In Bartlett Village today, the main line track is still used by the Conway Scenic Railroad. Some of the siding track has been removed but a good portion of it remains in place but is buried under dirt and grass.

Heading Into Crawford Notch

Leaving Bartlett Village, the initial part of the construction heading into Crawford Notch required the construction of four iron bridges to cross major streams and rivers plus a good deal of engineering to create a solid track bed crossing some marsh areas. Entering the Notch, the first notable flag stop was at the Bemis mansion, the home of Dr. Samuel Bemis. Bemis also owned a considerable part of the land in Hart's Location. Bemis sold the right of way through Hart's Location to the railroad for \$1 but he had conditions to be met. Bemis wanted a siding installed for train cars carrying coal to heat his "Stone Cottage." He also wanted a station house built and a second spur on his property. All of these "wants" were granted. The Fuller and Harding firm came back into the picture to construct this section of track.

Dr. Samuel Bemis (1793 – 1881) came to the White Hills from Boston in 1833. A dentist by profession, he perfected the manufacture of false teeth. He was also a clockmaker, farmer, sawmill owner, and later in life ran a tavern. In April 1840, he took up photography as a hobby. He bought one of the first cameras in the United States, a daguerreotype camera, and started photographing scenes in Boston. Upon arriving in the mountains, he befriended Abel Crawford and began photographing the mountain scenery. His camera is now owned by Kodak and is in their museum.

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P&O Railroad continued ...

Enjoying his solitude here in the mountains, he bought 6,000 acres from Abel Crawford (most of current day Hart's Location). From 1860 to 1870, he built his "Stone Cottage," a granite mansion built from stone quarried from his own quarry on the Sawyer River. He would later become friends with Godfrey Frankenstein, a German landscape painter who happened into the Notch. Bemis was known as an eccentric recluse. It is said that he enjoyed naming things after himself and his friend Frankenstein. Several landmarks in Crawford Notch still bear their names. Upon his death, he left all his property including the mansion to George Morey, his friend, caretaker, and manager of his farm. Morey's daughter-in-law, Florence, would eventually convert the mansion into the Inn Unique. After the inn closed, the house sat vacant for several years and was reopened in the late 1980s as today's Notchland Inn.

Back to our railroad project, the men working on the P&O railroad construction in Hart's Location stayed at the Mount Crawford House, across from the Bemis mansion. In the time of their stay, they reportedly ruined the interior of the inn with their rowdy behavior.

Frankenstein Trestle

As the construction crew proceeded up the Notch, both in grade and distance, they came upon a massive gorge spanning about 500 feet across and 85 feet deep. To cross this gap, the P&O built an equally impressive trestle and named it after the gorge over which it would pass, Frankenstein Trestle. Construction on the trestle began on December 31, 1874. Initial trestle plans called for a wooden beam structure but the ship transporting the timbers from the southern United States sank at sea. The Phoenix Bridge Company proposed and built an iron trestle under the supervision of John Anderson. The trestle was completed on June 29, 1875. While the original trestle remains in place today, it was strengthened in 1930 and 1950 to handle increasingly heavy train loads.



A bit about Godfrey Frankenstein. Godfrey Frankenstein was born in Germany in 1820 with the family name of "Trecht." They adopted the name "Frankenstein" when they immigrated to the United States in 1831. At the age of 13, he opened his own sign painting business, and at age 19, he declared himself a portrait painter. He later turned to landscape painting. He moved around the mid-west but Ohio was his mainstay. Frankenstein was the first president of the Cincinnati Academy of Fine Arts. During his visits to our mountains, he stayed with Bemis. Becoming good friends, Bemis honored his friend by naming landmarks after him. Aside from the gorge under the trestle, Frankenstein Cliff is another notable landmark that Bemis named for his friend. Frankenstein died in 1873, in Springfield, OH.

The Last Hurdles

Knowing that the trestle would take time to build and wanting to continue with the track project, in December 1874, the P&O started two track laying crews, one heading west from the western end of the Frankenstein Gorge and another at Fabyan, heading east into the Notch. There were three major obstacles awaiting the track crews in this steepest section of the Notch. Their first was a large granite outcropping at the top of the Notch that would become known as "The Great Cut." Getting through this granite required hand driven star-drills and a great deal of black powder for blasting. A second challenge was encountered

continued on next page



P&O Railroad continued ...

at the base of Mount Willard. There, the mountain side offered no usable surface to support a railbed. To get past this span, a granite shelf was constructed to support a wooden trestle. That trestle, still in place today, is hidden by stone fill from The Great Cut that was poured over the trestle. Yet another challenge was the crossing of the gorge over Willey Brook. Here, the Willey Brook Bridge was constructed in July 1875. It was built in two sections, one of iron and one of wood but later, in 1884, the wooden section was replaced by an iron structure. The entire iron bridge was replaced in 1905.



P&O Engine in the Great Cut

With all the track, bridge, and trestle work completed, the final spike was driven by P&O President, Samuel Anderson, on August 7, 1875. The story goes that he started driving the spike but a worker took over to send it home, so to speak. Driving a rail spike requires a great deal of strength and accuracy as the spike hammer is swung. With this momentous occasion celebrated by cannon salutes and bands, the rail connections between Portland, ME, the mid-west, and Canada was now complete.

The life span of the P&O railroad was relatively short after completing the tracks. The P&O went into receivership in 1884 and was reorganized as the Portland & Ogdensburg *Railway*. The P&O leased the tracks to the Maine Central Railroad (MEC) for 999 years in 1888. In 1943, the lease arrangement was cancelled and the P&O Railway was absorbed into the MEC. MEC continued to operate with both passenger and freight service for several decades. Improvements in road construction and the popularity of automobile and truck transportation decreased train ridership and commercial transportation of goods by rail. After 108 years of P&O and MEC rail service through Bartlett and Crawford Notch, passenger service ended on April 29, 1958 while freight service continued to September 3, 1983.

Impacts of the Railroad Through Bartlett and Crawford Notch

The arrival of the railroads in the area brought about major changes to Bartlett (including Glen and Intervale) but relatively few changes in Hart's Location. A few highlights include:

- ♦ Bartlett Census: 1860 – 1890 Bartlett population according to US Census: 1860 – 735; 1870 – 629 (-14.4%); 1880 – 1,044 (+66%); 1890 – 1,247 (+19.4%). Notice the dramatic jump between 1870 and 1880
- ♦ Employment: Jobs were created through Bartlett and Hart's Location for railroad workers (e.g., engineers, mechanics, station masters, yardmen of all sorts, trainmen, railroad police, to name a few); new mills would add more jobs
- ♦ Inns and Hotels Built: The tourist industry boomed as summer visitors from Boston and New York were able to get to the mountains faster and easier than by stagecoach. Bartlett had 78 inns and hotels by the late 1800s; inns and hotels also opened in Jackson with tourists arriving at the Glen Station and traveling to Jackson initially by horse and carriage
- ♦ Shops Open: Other commercial enterprises (e.g., general stores and local shops) started in the late 1800s and early 1900s
- ♦ Entertainment & Exploration: Tourist attractions opened as did trails for hiking and horseback riding
- ♦ Logging and Lumbering: Logging and lumbering industries started as the railroads provided an easy method of getting logs to the mills and lumber to the markets; the Bartlett Land & Lumber Company started operations with their Bartlett and Albany Railroad in 1873; the Kearsarge Peg Mill had rail sidings to their mill beginning in 1878; the Carrigain logging settlement with their Saco Valley Railroad started in 1893; and Livermore with its Sawyer River Railroad started in 1875; and others followed.

Final Thoughts

The building of the railroad from Portland to Fabyan took a great deal of foresight, planning, and very hard work. When completed, this rail line brought a new life to a quiet section of New Hampshire. One can argue how good or bad this was, but the fact remains that the railroad opened new horizons for the area and country. Today, the history of the building of the railroad and the people who worked on the rails is something that we (BHS) are trying to capture and preserve as many families here in Bartlett are here because a family member worked on the railroad.



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

The Historical Herald

www.BartlettHistory.Org

Facebook: Bartlett Historical-Society

... A Few Other Items of Note

Upcoming—Special Presentation - With Ben English—August 1st, 7:00 p.m.

On Friday, August 1, 7:00 PM *at the Bartlett Congregational Church, 14 Albany Avenue, Bartlett (due to expected audience size)*, we are hosting a special presentation “*A Century of Railroad in Crawford Notch*” by Ben English, BHS member, railroad historian, and author. This presentation covers the operation of the Maine Central’s Mountain Division from the age of steam to the age of diesel. Ben will talk about the trains and the people that made transportation by rail through Crawford Notch happen. This is a part of our partnership with the Conway Scenic Railroad. There is no admission fee for this presentation but donations to BHS are greatly appreciated at the door.

Portland & Ogdensburg—Historical Overview Presentation

On June 28th, Scotty Mallett, one of our BHS Board members and railroad historian, gave a very interesting presentation on the building of the railroad by the Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad from Portland, ME to Fabyan, in the town of Carroll, NH. About 60 people attended the talk and a lively Q&A period followed. BHS hosted this talk as a part of our partnership with the Conway Scenic Railroad and their celebration of the 150th anniversary of the completion of the tracks through Bartlett and Crawford Notch.

How Should BHS Help Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of America?

2026 will mark the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution and formation of our nation. We’re starting to give some thought on how BHS might commemorate this anniversary. If you have any ideas on this topic, please let us know in person at the museum, by email (BartlettHistoryNH@gmail.com), or by letter at our address, PO Box 514, Bartlett, NH 03812. We’d enjoy reading or hearing your ideas.

Some Final Words from Visitors to the Museum

We certainly take pride in our museum but the real measure of our success comes from Guest Book comments. We welcome anyone with an interest in our local history.

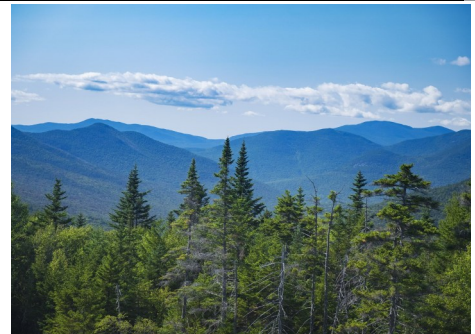
◇ An A-1 local museum	◇ Nice job! I especially like the stained-glass windows lit in boxes. Very thoughtful and unique
◇ Incredible restoration. Congratulations.	
◇ Job well done. It’s beautiful and very interesting	◇ If walls could talk, Wonderful history & reconstruction. Blessings
◇ Incredible restoration. Congratulations.	
◇ Very educational	

Bartlett Historical Society—Board of Directors

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View across the mountain vista