

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

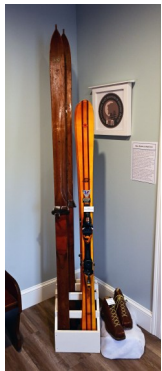
Spring 2026 Edition (2026:2)

The Bartlett

Historical Society

What's New at the BHS Museum?

Winter in the Valley



The Bartlett Historical Society Museum is still hosting our “Winter in the Valley” exhibit. Here’s some highlights of what you can explore:

Winter Mobility & Fun: Our *Portland Cutter Sleigh*, Bartlett-made dog sled, and children’s sled plus numerous photos and stories

Ski Mountain Stories: The *formation of Attitash and Beak Peak* ski resorts; Plans for a ski resort in Hart’s Location; Two of the original blueprints for Beak Peak.

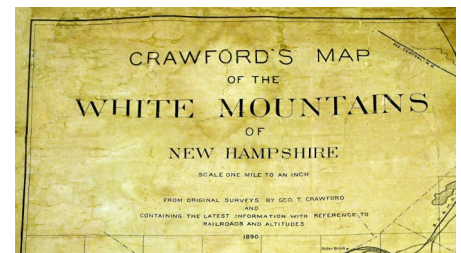


The Snow Train Story: One of many snow train posters and the Snow Train story

Lost Ski Areas in Bartlett?: Yes, we had two. One was built on the land once farmed by the Stanton family. The other was once owned by the owner of Pabst Brewing Company before coming under local ownership. Their full stories are in our museum.



Historic Maps: An 1860 Carroll County wall map & 1890 Crawford’s Map of the White Mountains plus a rare hand-drawn copy of a 1795 Hart’s Location, Merrill’s Plan map



Our BHS Reference Library:
Local & regional history books, town reports, genealogies

Our Snow Roller Story: See our restored roller on the corner of Albany Avenue and Route 302 and our sidewalk roller in the museum

Plus! Our *military display* contains many items of local history donated by the families of Bartlett soldiers. Our *geological history display* containing fascinated minerals, all of which are from Bartlett. Our *tourism* display showing many of the inns and hotels in Bartlett from the 1800 and 1900s.

The Bartlett Historical Society Museum is open every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

All are welcome to spend some time learning about our local history. Admission is free; donations at the door for museum operations are gratefully appreciated



President's Message

Spring is upon us here in the White Mountains and while we bid farewell to a cold and somewhat snowy winter, we welcome our early spring a.k.a. "Mud Season." All our normally solid ground turns into soft mush but soon the flowers will appear, and warm breezes will fill the air.

Over the winter, the BHS museum was relatively quiet from a visitor perspective. Still, we met some very interesting people as they came to visit our museum. A couple of weeks ago, a gentleman from Massachusetts stopped in and told us that he was married in the building when it was a church. This quiet time gave us plenty of opportunity to do some behind the scenes work (i.e., cataloging a backlog of donated items, developing ideas for our next set of museum exhibits, planning for the future of BHS, doing research on historical topics, etc.). We are also working on our new BHS website with the help of BHS volunteers, Tom and Jackie Connors. We'll have more about this when we launch it later in 2026.

I mentioned that we did some planning for the future of BHS. In December 2025, I had the great fortune to have a conversation with Attorney Leonard Nelson, a trustee of the Robert and Dorothy Goldberg Charitable Foundation. This foundation provided several grants supporting our building renovation and have continued their support now that our museum is open. Mr. Nelson said that the foundation would like to help BHS build an endowment fund that will secure the financial needs of the organization. There's more information about our plans for this endowment fund in this newsletter.

We also spent time looking into the development of a marketing plan for the organization. Too often we hear people say that they didn't know we have a museum. To change that perspective, we are going to advertise our BHS museum in the Mount Washington Valley Chamber of Commerce Visitor Guide and the Conway Daily Sun's North Conway/Mount Washington Valley visitor's guide plus through some other methods. We have great stories to tell and a wonderful museum in which to tell them. We're extending an invitation to experience our local history.

Another year-round activity is our historical research. In this edition of the newsletter, we have a focus on several major fires that occurred in Bartlett, Hart's Location, and Livermore. While doing the research for this article, I came across several notes related to our local history in books dating back to the 1800s. These tidbits will eventually fill in the pieces of other research mysteries. One thing leads to another and that's what makes the study of history so much fun. As we develop stories for the different historical details we find, we'll incorporate them into stories for this newsletter.

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

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Please give them first consideration when searching for goods, services, dining, or entertainment.

Bartlett Historical Society - Business Members

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BHS Notes

2026 Membership Drive Update

Our 2026 BHS Membership Drive has officially concluded but we always welcome new memberships at any time of the year. For 2026, we have 251 members which is down slightly from our 2025 total, however, there are still a few past members from whom we have not heard. *Thank You to all our members who have renewed or joined anew in 2026 at the General, Patron, or Business level.* We will do our best to keep you up to date on BHS activities and hope that we can continue to enlighten you on the history of Bartlett, Hart's Location, and Livermore. If you know someone who might enjoy being a BHS member, please let them know of our historical society or give them a membership as a "gift from a friend." Thank you for your continued support.

Regional Meeting of Historical Societies

In February, Phil Franklin received an email from the Executive Director of the Museums of the Bethel Historical Society (Bethel, Maine) inviting BHS to join in a regional meeting of historical societies from western Maine and Northern New Hampshire. Curious about this event, Phil, along with BHS Curator, Kathy Howard, attended the meeting. They joined a group of representatives from about 30 other historical societies, several in New Hampshire including Jackson, Conway, Jefferson, and Berlin and Coos County historical societies.

Meeting attendees represented a mix of historical societies, some with several museum buildings and others who are just starting out and looking for advice on how to attract members, how to fundraise, and how to simply get established. By listening to others, we found that BHS could be considered a well-established organization. Phil spoke of our capital campaign, new museum, and efforts to attract new members while retaining current members. Other attendees spoke about things that their organizations were doing including programs to engage elementary school students in local history, their affiliation with their towns*, and joining in programs or events being run by other organizations in their town.

A number of interesting ideas came from this meeting, some of which we will explore for further development (e.g., creating a Junior BHS membership for youth and other program marketing ideas). Aside from sharing ideas and comparing notes, so to speak, a key reason for going to meetings such as this is the ability to meet others who are in the business of preserving local history and making new or renewing contacts. For example, Phil and Kathy met friends from the Berlin and Coos Historical Society. They had visited our museum several months ago and we were happy to reconnect.

In 2022, the leadership of BHS invited representatives from the historical societies in the Mount Washington region to a similar meeting. The meeting was productive as a number of ideas were exchanged. We had all good intentions of continuing this gathering with another follow-up meeting but unfortunately that never happened. This meeting centered in Bethel, Maine has relit the fire to get that sort of meeting reorganized in our museum with historical societies centered in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

* Note: Some historical societies are affiliated with their local town government and receive financial support as well as other support from their town; BHS has chosen to be an independent non-profit organization within Bartlett.

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 historical interest. We are always interested to know what you'd like to hear about. If you have an idea for a topic, please let us know.

January 2026 Presentation Recap—"Logging Railroads of the White Mountains" with Dave Govatski



On January 16, 2026, we held the first of our 2026 Quarterly Presentation Series events. Dave Govatski enlightened the audience of about 45 with his presentation on the "Logging Railroads of the White Mountains." Dave reviewed the logging history in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He talked about the different logging railroads including ones in Bartlett and Crawford Notch and noted that many of these old railbeds are now hiking trails, fire roads, and even paved roads. Dave presented an interesting look at the significant destruction to the forest that resulted in legal protections through the Weeks Act helping bring the White Mountain National Forest into existence. We thank Dave for this very interesting presentation.

2026 Presentation Line-up

Wednesday, April 15, 2026: "Wit and Wisdom: The Forgotten Literary Life of New England Villages" with Jo Radner, Freelance Storyteller and Oral Historian

Before and after the Civil War, our rural ancestors created neighborhood events to improve their minds. Community members composed and read aloud homegrown, handwritten literary "newspapers" full of keen verbal wit. Sometimes serious, sometimes sentimental but mostly very funny, these "newspapers" were common in villages across Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont and revealed the hopes, fears, humor and surprisingly daring behavior of our forebearers. Jo Radner shares excerpts from her book about hundreds of these "newspapers" and provides examples from villages in our region.



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

Wednesday, June 17, 2026: Colonies to Country: The Forming of the United States of America" with Bob Cottrell, Curator of the Henney History Room, Local Historian

In 1776, talk of finding our independence from our Royal Governance by England was growing in the colonies. On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Second Continental Congress and our effort to depart from British rule began. By 1789, the Revolutionary War saw the defeat of the British troops and our nation had a new Constitution. The effort to form a government and move from 13 separate colonies to 13 states under a federal government was underway.



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

NEW!! Wednesday, October 21, 2026: Abenaki: Past, Present & Future" with Bob Cottrell, Curator of the Henney History Room, Local Historian

The Abenaki Indian Nation occupied land from Canada through New Hampshire and Maine moving seasonally throughout the area. They had a settlement in Intervale. Join us to learn about this local Indian Nation, the issues of Native American culture in the area, and the efforts to preserve that culture.



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

BHS Curator's Report—BHS Curator Kathy Howard

After preparing the new exhibits for our “Winter in the Valley” displays, the workload turned back to cataloging the items that have been donated and collected over the years. Prior to the opening of the Museum, donations were housed at the Society’s chalet as well as at Board members’ homes and also in storage units. All of these items have been moved to the Museum for sorting and processing. Since mid-January 2026, over 150 previously uncataloged items have been processed with new catalog records added to our PastPerfect database.

The first step in the cataloging process is to assign two numbers to the item. The first number – the accession number allows us to keep track of the source (donor information). The second number, known as the object id number in the Pastperfect database is the unique number assigned to each item. This unique number allows us to retrieve an item from wherever it is stored in the Museum collection.

Every catalog record in PastPerfect displays the exact location of each item in the Museum collection. Most books are stored in the Museum’s “library”, filed by author name and available for browsing by any of our visitors. Miscellaneous documents, photos and actual objects are stored in a different manner in boxes or folders. The Museum has a number of file cabinets currently holding over 300 folders where various papers and newspaper clippings, etc. are stored by subject. Objects, photos and other documents are each stored separately in clear, archival zip lock bags labeled with the item’s object id number. These bagged items are then stored in a series of plastic boxes. Wherever possible, boxes have been labeled by broad subject class – railroads, skiing, schools, etc. - and items that can be grouped by a subject are boxed together. Miscellaneous items are boxed by id numbers. This system works very well for most items in the Museum collection. The exception to this storage system is the problem encountered in storing large items or most framed documents, maps, paintings, posters and prints.

The Society currently rents two storage units. These offsite areas hold items which cannot be stored in the Museum. Excess shelving, display cases/platforms, leftover construction materials, etc. are all stored in an unheated unit. Museum collection items are stored in a climate-controlled unit. Plans for spring 2026 include organizing this storage unit to allow us easy access to all of the 100+ items stored there. The plan is to set up shelving for organizing large items. Most storage items have been bagged/boxed and labeled but some items too large for a container are tagged with the id number. Custom bins have been built for the storage of framed items. Although these items in storage won’t be immediately available to Museum visitors, we hope to provide 24 hour turn around for retrieving storage items when requested.

Our PastPerfect database allows for the attachment of images to the catalog record so we will be photographing each of these stored items. Eventually, all of the items in the entire Museum collection will have a digital image attached to each catalog record. Anyone with an interest in photography who has time to volunteer would be welcome to join this project. Many documents and papers can be scanned and the digital image attached to the catalog record. Our postcard collection is currently in the cataloging process but we hope to attach a scanned image of each card to the catalog record. We would welcome any help with this project as well.

If you would like to volunteer to be a part of taking the BHS into the future please contact us at bartletthistorynh@gmail.com or call (603) 374-5037. Better yet, come in for a visit and let us know directly that you would like to be a part of the process!

Fire! – Sound the Alarm!

by Phil Franklin

The study of local history, much like the study of national and world history, is filled with stories of triumph as well as tragedy. Fortunately, the triumphs generally outweigh the tragedies, but those tragic times need to be remembered as a part of the historic record.

One of the most destructive and terrifying events a community could face in the 1800s (and even today) is the discovery of a fire in a building or on the land. This was especially true in rural communities where fire departments often didn't exist. In the 1800s, rural towns might have fought fires with a horse drawn wagon, a primitive water pumping system, and local volunteers manning hoses and bucket brigades. They often relied on support from neighboring communities for larger fires, that type of support still occurs today. While fire fighting and prevention measures have improved over the years, fires still present tremendous dangers to one and all.

Bartlett, Hart's Location, and Livermore have seen their share of destructive fires, so we thought it would be interesting to look back at some notable fires and review the aftermath – how did the people recover (or not) from these events; what changed because of these events? In this article, we'll walk back in time highlighting some of the most notable fires in the area with the final account of a fire so large it destroyed a major portion of Bartlett Village.

Forest Fires

In May 2022, a 106-acre forest fire (called the "Bemis Fire") broke out in Crawford Notch State Park in Hart's Location. Three areas of fire sped up the steep slope leading up to Frankenstein Cliff. Fire fighters from Bartlett and many other towns and agencies responded. The fire burned for several days before it was finally extinguished. Scars from the fire are still seen on the slope below Frankenstein Cliff in Crawford Notch. While the fire and resulting damage was limited to the forest, disruption to hiking and camping in the area lingered for days.

In the days of logging in the mountains, before the Weeks Act of 1911 helped create the White Mountain National Forest, fires were known to ignite in the brush left by the logging operations. Often caused by lightning, these fires burned many acres before rain water stopped them.

The Kearsarge Peg Company

The Kearsarge Peg Company, or "The Peg Mill," was a Bartlett fixture and major employer in town for decades. The last known peg mill in the world, was consumed by fire on February 12, 2016. Two workers were at the mill on the day of the fire but they were working outside, with their backs to the mill. A strong northwesterly wind blew the smoke away from them so they didn't see the fire until it was too late.



The mill manufactured wooden pegs for the shoe making industry in the early 1900s. When shoe making moved on from using wooden pegs, a new use for the pegs was discovered. The pegs, when tumbled in drums with items such as eyeglass frames and fishing lures, deburred the metal, leaving smooth finishes on these items. This new use prolonged the operation of the mill.

When the mill burned, a batch of fishing lures was being processed. It is presumed that sparks from a motor ignited wood dust and the mill was destroyed. The peg mill holds a strong sentimental bond with residents, many of whom recall their days of employment there and the mill's presence in Bartlett Village. Today, the smokestack and a couple of out-buildings are all that remain on the mill site.

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The What-Not-Shop

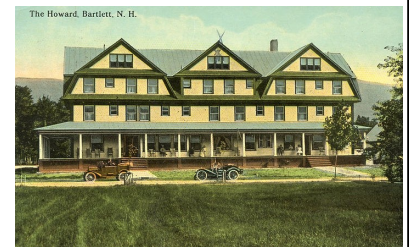
The What-Not-Shop was a local convenience store that was famous for providing just about anything you could need, from ice cream to a haircut to Shell brand gasoline. The store was operated by Franklin and Elmeda George whose residence was directly across the street (Route 302) from the shop. The George's operated the shop until 1987 when Franklin died. It passed through a series of subsequent owners until, in January 2009, then renamed to the Bear Notch Deli, the shop was destroyed by an electrical fire. Today, the site of the shop is the parking lot for the Bartlett Congregational Church at the corner of Albany Avenue and Route 302. However, residents remember this shop as a classic country store.



The Bartlett Hotel

The Bartlett Hotel had a long legacy in town and two major fires, the second of which brought an end to this well-known establishment. Originally built as the summer home of one of the four original owners of the Bartlett Land & Lumber Company, it was purchased in 1892 by Edgar Stevens and enlarged from a 12-room house to a thirty-four-room hotel called "The Cave Mountain House." The hotel was quite elegant as it had large rooms with electric lights (after 1898) and hot and cold running water. On May 1, 1905, a kitchen fire destroyed the building.

In 1912, Bartlett businessman G.K. Howard rebuilt the hotel and renamed it "The Howard Hotel." Again, with first class elegance including bathrooms for each room, telephones to the front desk, a seventy-five-seat dining room, and drivers to bring guests about the area. In 1947, the hotel was sold to Matt Elliot and Realand Hart and renamed the "Bartlett Hotel."



In 1985, the Yannonese family of Brockton, MA purchased the hotel. On March 7, 1989, the hotel caught fire as a worker was using a heating element to thaw frozen pipes bringing an end to this Bartlett landmark.

Today, the hotel site is a town park where summer musical concerts are held and a Christmas tree illuminates the winter scene. This classic hotel still is a part of the Bartlett landscape, if only in memory.

Harry Rogers Farm

Harry Rogers Farm was one of the oldest farms in Bartlett. It was started in 1780 by Jonathan Tasker, a town founder. The Rogers Farm was located at "Rogers Crossing" (the crossing of Route 302 and the railroad tracks for today's Conway Scenic Railroad near Attitash). This fire started in one of the farm's barns on Saturday, January 26, 1980. With the temperature at about 10 degrees and winds reported at 40 to 50 miles per hour, the fire spread quickly to other buildings on the property. Firemen from the Bartlett Village and Glen fire departments (two separate departments at that time), with support from Jackson and North Conway fought the fire. The fire consumed all but one of the buildings and all the farm animals. The surviving barn is located just a few feet from the edge of the current Route 302. After the fire, the property was sold to the Attitash Lift Corporation (a part of the Attitash Ski Resort). Rogers and his niece were allowed to place a trailer on the property where they lived until Harry died in 1989. continued on next page



Sound the Alarm continued ...

Today, residents of Bartlett who were living here at the time of the fire still recall the disaster. The late Norman Head once commented to this writer that he passed by the farm early that morning for a business meeting in Bartlett Village. When he returned 45 minutes later, the farm was completely engulfed. Today, motorists and train riders pass by the weathered barn at Rogers Crossing not knowing that there was a farm, dating back to 1780, on that now tree covered land.

Sawmill Fires at Livermore

Sawmill fires were an ever-present danger in the late 1800s and early 1900s as the logging industry was in full gear. The sawmills of Livermore were built and rebuilt three times. Livermore was a small town, incorporated in 1876, with a large acreage bordering Bartlett and Hart's Location. The first mill was built in 1876 and burned in 1876. It was subsequently rebuilt but would burn again in 1909 and 1918, being rebuilt after both of these fires. A massive flood of the Sawyer River in 1927 effectively spelled the end of the town with the mill closing in 1928. Most of the town's property was eventually sold to the U.S. Forest Service and is now part of the White Mountain National Forest. Disjointed parcels totaling 12 acres are still privately owned.

The most prominent feature of this town was the Saunders mansion, built by the family of the original owners of Livermore. In 1965, the new owners, the Shackford family, burned it to the ground because they could not stop vagrants and trespassers from vandalizing the old mansion. Today, Livermore is known as a "ghost town." The state unincorporated the town in 1951.

Bartlett Village Burns

While there are many more fires that could be sited, there is one catastrophe with which we'll close this article. This story occurs on a fateful evening in July 1896 as the business district of Bartlett Village burned to the ground. A fire that started in the back room of a shop in the Village quickly spread to several other structures, left fourteen families homeless, and caused thousands of dollars damage, much of it not covered by insurance. Our search for a map showing the businesses in the village at that time or of the fire damage was fruitless.

The best way to describe this disaster is through a story published in the White Mountain Reporter, a Conway newspaper, with their article from July 16, 1896. It is important to note that Bartlett did not have a fire department in 1896 so fire suppression was left to the local residents. This fire, however, was far beyond their capabilities. The fire occurred on July 12, 1896. The story reads as follows (transcribed as written):

Last Monday afternoon at about 5 o'clock the alarm of fire was sounded in our quiet village and almost before the people could realize it, a fire of such magnitude was underway that for a while it seemed as though the whole village was doomed. The fire started at the rear of H.L. Towle's barber shop, in a room occupied by H.L. Brooks as a part of a general store. In a very few minutes the

100 Years Ago ...

From the 1926 Bartlett Annual Report:

- ◆ F.H. Stillings was paid \$30 for *snowing bridges* (shoveling snow into covered bridges for sleighs)
- ◆ Maine Central Railroad paid the Bartlett Fire Precinct \$1,200 for water for the year
- ◆ Town Property Values included 125 Horses @ \$12,380 (\$99.04 ea.); 179 Cows @ \$10,485 (\$58.58 ea.); Total Town Property Value @ \$1,274,724.

store was completely enveloped in flames and rapidly spread to the adjoining buildings. Word was immediately telegraphed to North Conway for help and a special train was at once made up and went to their assistance, with quite a crew of men, the run of about ten miles being made in about ten minutes. Twelve buildings were burned including five stores, there being but one store left in the place.

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Several families were left destitute, not having time to save anything as the fire spread with such rapidity. By 8 o'clock the fire was under control, every building but one was burned flat, not even the walls remained standing to help tell the tale of desolation and destruction.

Total damage will reach about \$75,000 partially covered by insurance. Following is a list of the losers: Miss E.A. Meserve, double tenement house, loss \$2,000 insured for \$1,500; Frank George, building occupied as post office, and by P.J. Martin as a general store, loss \$3,000 ins. \$2,600. The mail and post office books were all saved, while Martin loses about \$15,000 on his stock with \$9,000 ins. The loss on the M. C. [Maine Central] depot, freight house and restaurant will reach \$10,000 covered by insurance. Julius Morrill who had charge of the restaurant and lived overhead lost about \$200 on furniture. The Woodbury Hotel Co. who ran the restaurant lose about \$2,000 with \$1,000 ins. E.O. Garland lost \$1,500 on building occupied by F.E. Garland as a drug store and jeweler shop, who lost \$2,500 in stock, ins. \$1,500. W.S. Foster and wife lose about \$1,500 on their store and millinery shop with goods in stock, with \$7,500 ins. J.F. Head, tenement house, \$1,500, ins. \$800. A.L. Meserve loses \$3,500 on his block with \$2,800 in. The building was occupied by E.O. Garland as a general store, who loses \$11,000 on his stock with \$6,000 ins.; Mrs. Bates milliner loses \$500, and G.M. Knowles, barber, has a slight loss. H.L. Towle, barber shop and pool room, loss \$1,500 on the building and \$1,000 on stock. Ins. \$1,000. H.L. Brooks loses \$2,000 on stock of goods with \$1,000 ins. Two families living overhead lose everything. Joseph Phinney, building occupied as barber shop and tenement, \$2,000, ins \$1,500. Frank Semino, \$1,500 ins \$700. There was also quite a loss by several families occupying tenements which were usable to give at this time. The work of rebuilding will begin at once. The new station, which will be built as soon as possible, will be located on the opposite side of the tracks from the old one, the land having been purchased on Monday morning for the same. The new location will be a decided improvement as it will do away with crossing the tracks every time you go go [sic] from Main street to the station.

In a desperate effort to get a fire fighting effort underway, town officials apparently turned to the owners of the Bartlett Land and Lumber Company for help. By 1896, the mill was no longer under local ownership. A report in "*The Indicator – A National Journal of Insurance*," volume XIX, covering July 1896 – December 1896 contains a note of the mill owners response:

The business district of Bartlett, N.H. was destroyed by fire ten days ago. The Bartlett Lumber Company refused the aid of its hose and pump because on a similar occasion it had done so and the town refused to pay therefor.

A transcript of an article publication in the Concord Evening Monitor, July 13, 1896, offers additional commentary. First, we see a contradiction in this article stating that the fire started at H.L. Towle's "grocery store" not his barber shop. It goes on to reference the call to North Conway and the special train sent up with help to fight the fire and a statement reading "Total Damage will approximate \$100,000." Then the second paragraph states:

"When the special arrived the business portion of the town was in ashes. The most strenuous [sic] efforts of the towns people, assisted by the willing guests of the hotels availed to nothing. Within 2^{1/2} hours but one store was left in place."

This brings out an important point, being that this fire occurred in the middle of the summer tourist season. Tourists staying at local hotels, the closest being the Bartlett House owned by Frank George, were on the edge of this calamity. The Bartlett House, located in the center of the village on Main Street (today's US Route 302) started receiving guests shortly after 1856, and by 1872, could accommodate fifty guests.

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Sound the Alarm continued ...

In addition to the damage noted in both articles, the first public library in Bartlett, established in 1893, was also impacted by the 1896 fire. A notation in the *“Third Biennial Report of the Board of Library Commissioners of New Hampshire”*, dated December 1, 1896, states:

“Bartlett. During this past summer, the building in which the library was located was destroyed by fire. The library furnishings were lost, but the books were saved.”

The Library Commissioners report, stated the library contained 209 books provided with state aid, 4 volumes of government and state reports, and 112 books gifted during the past two years (the location of the library is still unknown). The library was relocated in the basement of the Union Congregational Society (today’s Bartlett Congregational Church) which opened in August 1895 and eventually moved to the Josiah Bartlett Elementary School.

One thing we can deduce about the weather on that fateful day was there must have been a strong wind blowing from the northwest to the southeast. The reason for this deduction is that the train station burned. The station was located 150 to 200 yards from the nearest likely burning building. Embers from the fire must have been blown southward and landed on the station roof setting it ablaze.

A positive outcome of this major fire was that local fire record keeping got underway. In our BHS archives, we have documents dated 1896 (after the Village fire) recording fire incidents for the Village and Upper Bartlett in general. Most of the fires from the late 1800s and early 1900s noted as “dwelling” or “business” indicate that the result of the fire was a “total loss” for the building. The first indication of the formation of a formal fire department is found in a 1909 fire department journal. On the inside of the journal’s first page is its handwritten title – “Journal of the Bartlett Hose & Ladder Co.” The opening entry reads as follows:

“Bartlett, N.H. April 6, 1909

On the above date, the persons herein named met at the hose house to adopt constitution [sic] and by-laws for the government of a fire company to be known as the Bartlett Hose and Ladder Company.”

The first chief was H.L. Bowen. The executive committee was G.K. Howard, Chairman, along with H.L. Bowen and J.F. Donahue. The journal goes on to record the minutes of the first meeting along with many to follow. Also note that Bartlett’s Glen village formed its own fire department. Decades later, the Glen and Bartlett Village departments would combine into one department but that’s another story.

... In Conclusion

The fires highlighted in this article reflect a small number of the fires we find recorded in journals for both Bartlett Village and Glen. The earliest recorded fire was just west of Bartlett Village when a tavern and stagecoach stop belonging to Mr. Nicholas T. Stillings burned in April 1879. Our most recent major fire was the loss of the popular Kringle’s Pizza & Country Store in 2026. Fortunately, in all the fires noted in this article, no one was reported to be killed and there is no mention of injury to the firefighters or residents.

We salute the men and women, past and present, who volunteer their time to serve on this most important civic organization.

Sources: Aside from the citings in this article, information was drawn from the BHS website; Bartlett, New Hampshire ... in the valley of the Saco by Aileen Carroll; Hart’s Location in Crawford Notch by Marion L. Varney



The Bartlett Snow Roller—Restored 2015

The Historical Herald

www.BartlettHistory.Org

Facebook: Bartlett Historical-Society

BHS Endowment Fund—Planning for the Future

Your BHS Board of Directors is not only responsible for the immediate and short-term future of the Historical Society but also for the long-term future of BHS. Aside from the steps we are taking to preserve our collection of historically significant artifacts, we are also responsible for the financial outlook for the organization. Unlike many historical societies that are affiliated with their hometown, receiving financial and “housing” support, BHS is an independent organization within the town of Bartlett; by design we do not draw tax payer funds or town building support.

From a financial perspective, BHS is presently on solid ground and we want the organization to remain that way. To help secure the financial future of the organization, we have established an Endowment Fund. Endowments are, by definition, established by non-profit organizations to create a reliable source of self-funding for its mission related activities. Donations (principal) is invested and the non-profit draws some or all of their operational funding off of the interest earned on that principal. As the principal grows, so does the interest income—some people refer to this as a “rainy day fund.”



In early December 2025, a trustee from the Robert and Dorothy Goldberg Charitable Foundation approached BHS President Phil Franklin with an offer to help jump start our Endowment Fund. They offered a matching gift of \$4,000 if we could raise an equal amount by year end 2025. We met their challenge thanks to the generous support of a few year end donors. In 2026, we have already accumulated donations of just over \$10,000 for the Endowment Fund.

A long-term goal for this fund is to have sufficient principal to allow the interest earned to cover most of our general operational expenses. This is where we are asking for your support. We are setting a fundraising goal of \$25,000 for 2026 to be designated for the BHS Endowment Fund. We are almost half way to that goal. With your help, we can achieve that goal and take another step to securing the financial future of the Bartlett Historical Society.

If you have questions about this Fund or want to discuss a donation, please contact Phil Franklin at Phil@BartlettHistory.org. As always, we thank you for your generous support for BHS.

Bartlett Historical Society—Board of Directors

Philip Franklin, President	Hannah Chandler, Vice President
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Cold water from melting snow creates beautiful waterfalls at Diana’s Bath, Bartlett