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Lee Ha

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Original Settler, Samuel Wells, Comes Alive with a Special Donation to BHS

We have many historical documents at BHS, but we'd be hard pressed to find one in our possession as old as a recent donation from Julia Allen. Julia traveled from Oregon with her ancestor's deed, from an original settler of our little town and hand delivered it to us in May.

The Samuel Wells deed, a part of which is pictured below, leaves 100 acres of his 800 acre parcel to one of his daughters, Hannah Wells Nash.

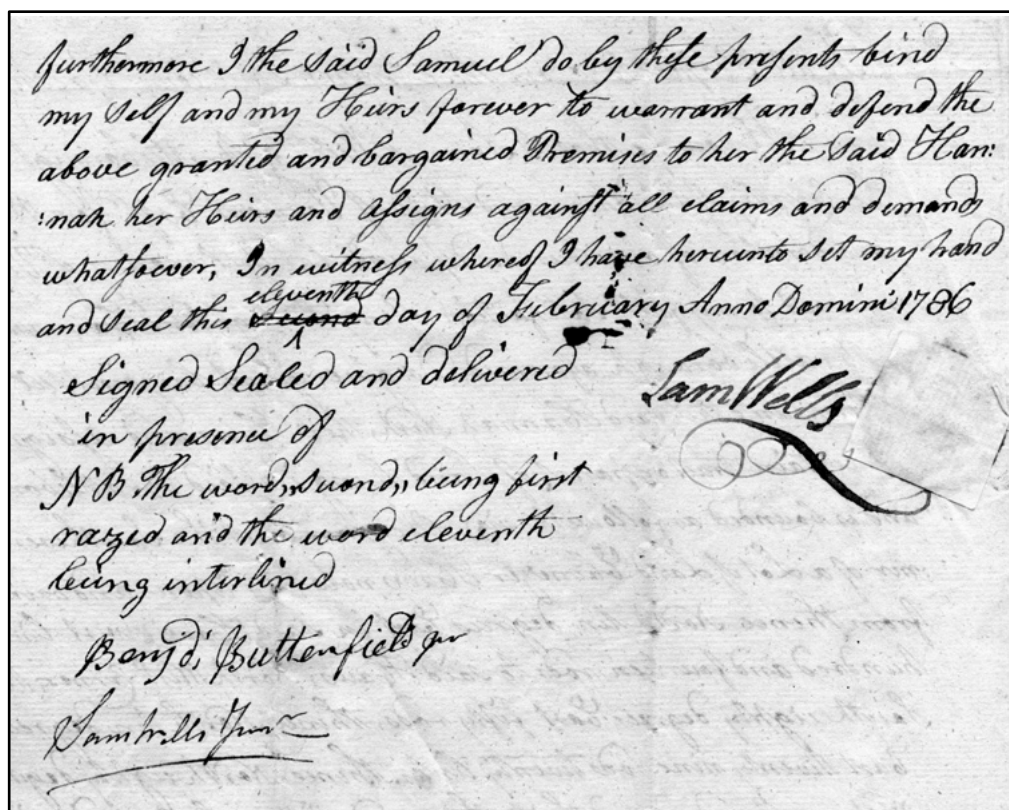
This property, as far as our research could tell, was on Upper Dummerston Road where Cold Springs, part of the Retreat, was located. Remnants of Cold Springs are still

visible today, but it was built many years after the Wells family left Vermont.

Samuel Wells moved to VT from Deerfield, MA and built himself a little cabin on his 800 acre parcel. He and his wife eventually had 13 children, 2 of which died in infancy. When he was able, in 1773, he built the house pictured on the next page for his growing family.

Since Samuel Wells was a Tory sympathizer, he was at risk of arrest and at one time left Brattleboro for Albany. He came back home when he

(continued on page 2)



Pictured above is a scan of the last page of the deed dated 1786, leaving 100 acres to Hannah Wells Nash and presumably the rest divided among his other children.

(continued from page 1)

felt safe and eventually died in 1786, which is the date of the deed now in our collection.

At the turn of the century, 1800, Canada offered all of Samuel Wells' children 1200 acres each for their father's loyalty to the crown. All of his children and their families left the United States for Canada.

Samuel Wells' house was eventually remodeled in 1861 by Colonel Miles and there opened the Burnside Academy. It was later used by the Retreat as a Summer Home for female patients.

-Lee Ha



Photos:

Above: Main part of Colonel Wells home he built in 1773. (BHS photo collection, date unknown)

Left: Wells homestead became Burnside Academy in 1861. (BHS Photo Collection, 1860s)

Below: Wells Homestead as the Retreat Summer Home for Women. Eventually it became Linden Lodge, a residence for borderline cases from the Retreat, but it burned down in 1920. (BHS Photo Collection, date unknown)



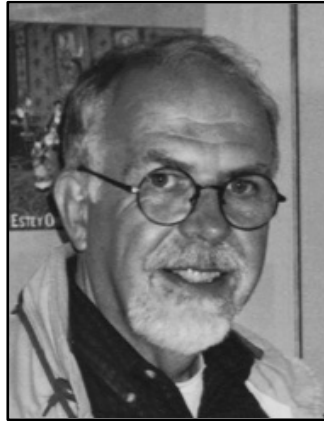
Remembering Wayne Carhart

Brattleboro lost a notable historian in March when Wayne Carhart died at the age of 75. Wayne came to Brattleboro to retire in 1998 and almost immediately joined the board of the Brattleboro Historical Society, becoming president in 1999 and working what seemed like fulltime in that position. During his five-year tenure he recruited many newcomers to the board and was responsible for what was probably the most visibly community-involved period in BHS history. (That is, until current president Joe Rivers started putting hundreds of Brattleboro photos on Facebook!)

It was Wayne's friendship with businessman Larry Cooke that resulted in Cooke's donation of the Jeremiah Beal House to BHS in 2000. Wayne's presidency saw the creation of two Brattleboro history books, published by Arcadia in 2001 and 2002. Also in 2002 BHS entered the digital age, inaugurating a website and beginning

the scanning and cataloging of its collection of glass plate negatives.

As a historian and writer Wayne brought to life the commonplace world of Brattleboro and its past. His six-year series in the Brattleboro Reformer included articles on cars, elevators, electricity, storms,



signs, buildings, trees, and bicycles.

After he left BHS in 2004 these articles were republished by the Chamber of Commerce for its 100th anniversary under the title "Brattleboro: Pages in

Time," still available from the Chamber or at BHS.

Perhaps the best evidence of Wayne's talent for and love of everyday history can be seen in "On the Job," the book he wrote in 2009 with fellow historian and photographer Chuck Fish. This was also published by the Chamber, and tells the story of Brattleboro's public works department. Chapters on water supply, snow removal, retaining walls, potholes and more are filled with fascinating town history and help us all appreciate our infrastructure and the workers who care for it.

In Wayne's first message as president in the BHS newsletter in 1999 he said that one of his most important goals was to bring Brattleboro history to the community. We can be grateful that his written words will continue to do that for many years to come.

-Barbara George

Aerial Views of I-91 Bridge Project 1950s and 2017

On January 2, 2017, friend of BHS Joseph Yudin, piloted his plane over Brattleboro and photographed our town. He then generously donated to the Society a beautiful collection of over 80 images to add to our ever-growing digital collection for future history buffs. Our digital collection also contains some aerial views of our town in the 1950s.



In 1954 I-91 was quite obviously the biggest change to our town. This picture was taken facing north, the West River runs east and west (horizontally). I-91 is but a dirt path and the bridge has not yet been built. (BHS Brattleboro Reformer Collection, 1954)



In the Fall of 2013, the I-91 West River Bridge reconstruction began and by January 2017, though nearing completion, it was not yet drivable. Facing West. (BHS Photo Collection: Joseph Yudin, 2017)

BHS Internet Presence Grows Beyond Expectations

Brattleboro Historical Society has entered the modern world by developing our social media capability. We are overhauling our webpage to make it simpler and more efficient by using the most modern techniques and equipment to bring you the 18th - 20th centuries of Brattleboro's history.

It began about a year ago. In keeping with our mission statement to generate interest in Brattleboro's history and involve itself in community affairs and collaborative ventures with its neighbors, BHS began to use social media. (It has all succeeded well beyond our expectations.) We knew the power of the digital world, but had no idea that there was a significant latent interest in Brattleboro's past. We received an education while trying to provide one!

Included here is a partial listing of what BHS has been doing recently to allow easier access to the public and the public easier access to

BHS:

(1) Collaborating with the students of Brattleboro Area Middle School, BHS produced a series of podcasts (see page 11) highlighting topics in Brattleboro history. The

"Thank you so much for posting all these photographs! I've been loving it, learning a lot. Very appreciative!"

podcasts appear weekly and are announced on the BHS Facebook and Twitter pages. All of them can be found on the BHS website:

<http://brattleborohistoricalsociety.org/>

(2) We worked with Brattleboro Community Television to produce a series of programs on the Vietnam War era and other projects. For its efforts BCTV awarded BHS its Nonprofit of the Year award that you can find at:

<http://www.brattleborotv.org/bctv->

annual-meeting/bctv-40-year-anniversary-party-members-mtg-2016 - 0:41:00)

(3) At our annual meeting last fall, BHS provided an overview of the history of Brattleboro's Main Street.

This overview has become the most popular video produced by BHS. Additionally, members have presented topics on local history to various assisted living facilities in Brattleboro, and to the Rotary Club.

(4) The most dramatic change in our visibility has come through the publication of photos from our extensive collection. Weekly, BHS continues to add to its digital collection of 'old photographs'. People are viewing photos and learning related historical facts daily. And the staff at the BHS adds to the collection weekly.

A recent analysis (**14 May 2017**) at the statistics from our Facebook page shows that we have followers in Canada, Germany, Brazil, Sweden, Japan, Turkey Thailand,



Brattleboro's Drive-in Movie under construction in the 1950s, Putney Road. (Photo BHS Brattleboro Reformer Collection, 1950s)



VT Squires Diner finds a home on Putney Road. (BHS Brattleboro Reformer Collection, 1950s)



Pages Ice Cream, Putney Road (BHS Brattleboro Reformer Photo Collection, 1950s)

Philippines, Peru, Nigeria, Austria, India, Ireland, Croatia and France, Kuwait and Bahrain. This is a partial list. It shows that, in the past year, we received over **20 thousand** reactions per week to the content we have put on Facebook and the website. Reactions to single photographs have astounded us. A photo of Brattleboro on New Year's Day in 1917 received over 10,500 views and elicited 593 reactions. A photo of a woman crossing Main Street received 9,800+ views.

The most rewarding aspect of this for BHS is the dialogue it creates among community members both current and past. At the opening of the Estey Organ Museum recently, one BHS board member noted: "I was introduced to a middle-aged couple who said they learned about Estey Organ Museum on the BHS Facebook page this week! Thanks so much for doing that."

Here are comments about the Vermont Squire Restaurant (photo

previous page):

"When Kim was a baby, that was our destination on Friday night, our one night "out on the town". She sat in her seat and was such a good girl!!"

"After skiing going there for hot chocolate and burgers - there is an auto store there now...oh the memories - it's right at the south of the road which goes to the old Plantation up on the hill...just above H&R

Block..."

Page's Ice Cream photo (above) elicited these comments:

"On Friday nights while producing the week's Harmony High program we'd take orders and someone would go to Page's and pick it up. Great burgers."

"I used to take my girl (now wife for 52 years) to Pages for dates. Good times and great ice cream."

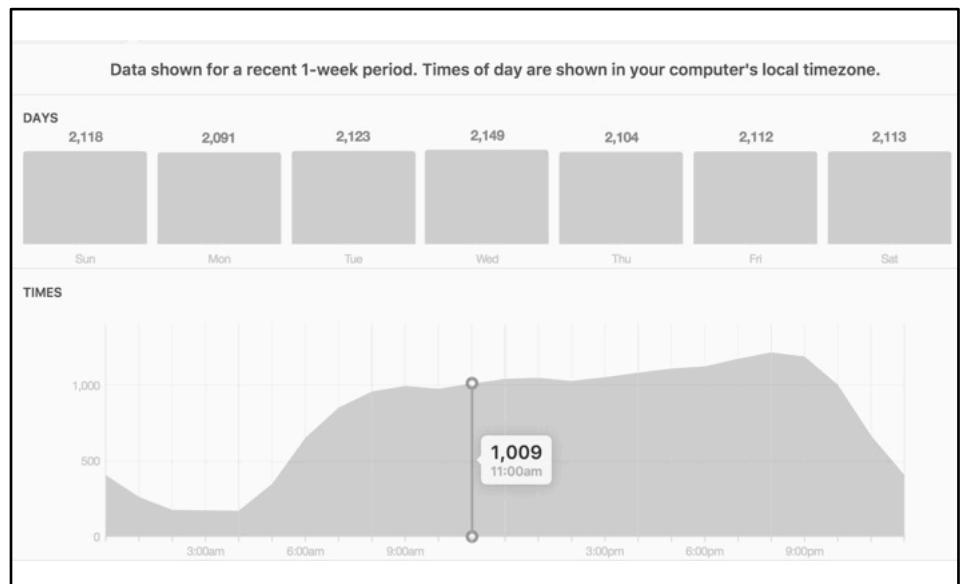
"I worked there when in high school. I made the best banana boat."

"As a young person from brattleboro it's nice to see these photos and see the hard working history of brattleboro and the many changes that have come to our small town (and some that should have not lol)"

And from an April 20 review of BHS:

"Kudos to the team or individual at the Brattleboro Historical Society who is responsible for the steady stream of pictures and posts on facebook and twitter. It is a total joy to see all of the old images from years gone by. I have a renewed appreciation for the long and rich history of my hometown."

-Bill Holiday



A sampling of statistics regarding our postings. (Screenshot Facebook Stats, June 2017)

Thank you to our Local Savings and Loan

A special thank you to Brattleboro Savings and Loan Association for their generous donations which allow us to expand our presence on the internet and make more of our collection available to the public.

History Center and Museum Update

The History Center and Museum had a slow start this spring, but has been picking up this summer. We had 17 SIT students visit with BHS President Joe Rivers giving them a grand tour. In June the Strolling of Heifers parade generated 58 visitors.

New displays are in the works so please stop by and see a bit of our rich history.

Sadly, on June 6 we lost volunteer and dear friend Robin Jones to cancer. For the past 2 years she volunteered in the History Center and Museum greeting visitors and answering questions. She will be missed by all of us.

We are in need of volunteers. If you have an interest in local history and an hour or two a week to spare, please call us or email BHS or better yet, stop in.

We want to thank the Brattleboro community and all visitors for your continued support.

-Daniel Guadalupe, History Center and Museum Manager



Daniel Guadalupe and Robin Jones at the opening of Brooks House, BHS Display. (Lee Ha, 2014)

Benjamin Crown: Pastel Artist

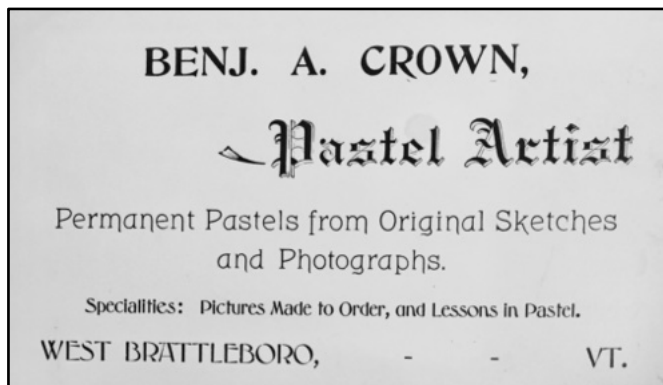
Benjamin Crown (1875-1952) was a well-known Brattleboro photographer to whom BHS is indebted for , photographically documenting, so much of Brattleboro's rich history. But did you know he was also a pastel artist? The artwork (right) is in our collection, as are other pieces of his art. We also have his business card (below).

We know Crown lived on Frost Place, in the first house on the west end, so he must have had a studio in West Brattleboro. Our files indicate he also had a studio in Northampton and was a well-known photographer in the tri-state area. A very artistic citizen of Brattleboro, indeed!

-Lee Ha



Above; Original pastel artwork of Benjamin Crown. Original is in color. (BHS collection)



Left: Benjamin A. Crown, Pastel Artist, business card. (BHS Business Card Collection)

The Lady in the Hat

Have you ever come across a picture with a name on the back which you don't recognize? I did; and set about finding out why my father would have had a picture of this very stylish lady among his family papers. She appears to be dressed in her Sunday best, in a hat with white plumes, a coat with a fur collar, and a fancy crocheted neckband on her dress. The photograph was taken at the Wyatt studio in Brattleboro.

The name Ruby Hescock, written on the back, meant nothing to me. With the help of BHS obituary archives she came alive. It turns out that this lady is my 1st cousin 3 times removed. What does that mean? Well, she's the cousin of my grandfather, William Douglas, who was one of her pall bearers.

Ruby was born in Brattleboro on November 16, 1873, the daughter of Rinaldo Nathan Hescock (a Civil War veteran) and Emma Margaret Chase Hescock. She had an older sister Mabel Emma Hescock, born in 1869, and a younger brother Ethan Nathan Hescock born in 1876. The Chase line is the connection between the two families.

Ruby died at the early age of 47 years, 1 month, and 3 days from complications following an operation for appendicitis on November 1, 1920. She was operated on by Dr. E. R. Lynch at the Melrose Hospital (see article pages 12/13), appeared to make a good recovery after three weeks of convalescence, but reentered the hospital on December 12, 1920 for a further operation which she did not long survive, dying on December 18, 1920. It must have been a sad

Christmas for the family that year.

Miss Hescock was a working woman, having trained as a stenographer at the Albany Business College. She first worked in Brattleboro for the Carpenter Organ Co, and then for the Estey Organ Co. from about 1916 until her death. She attended the First Universalist church in Brattleboro and belonged to the Brattleboro Business and Professional

aged 26, Emma's daughter; Ethan N. Hescock, aged 24, Emma's son, a keg maker; Lavinia C Chase, aged 58, Emma's sister, a single lady; and Abby A. White, aged 56, widowed, another sister of Emma's. The 1920 census lists the following as living at 18 Cherry Street: Emma M. Hescock, Lavinia Chase, Ruby Hescock, and John Jueson, a boarder who worked at a local lumber yard.

Her obituary states that she left "her mother, her sister Mrs. Arthur Howe of Ludlow, MA, her brother Ethan N. Hescock of Westfield, NJ, and her aunt Miss Lavinia Chase of Brattleboro. The service was held at the home (as was the custom of the day) with the burial at Meeting House Hill Cemetery. A large group of employees of the Estey Organ Co., where she had been working at the time of her death, attended in a body." Interestingly enough, my grandfather, William Douglas, also worked for the Estey Organ Co.

The Hescock - Douglas family connection goes back to James Arnold Chase, Ruby's grandfather and my great-great-great-great-grandfather.

Submitted by Carol Douglas Farrington



The Lady in the Hat, Ruby Hescock, ancestor to a long time BHS supporter, Carol Douglas Farrington

Women's club, being among its founders.

She lived for much of her life on Cherry Street. The 1900 census lists the names of 5 individuals living at 11 Cherry Street: Emma M. Hescock, aged 52, a widow; Ruby L. Hescock,

Sources:
Brattleboro Historical Society
Ancestry.com
Chroniclingamerica.loc.gov

Are you looking for information on local family ancestors? Stop by the Research Room Thursdays 2-4pm or Saturdays 10-12, perhaps we can help.

Our Scanning Project Timeline

These pictures from the BHS Brattleb some of the Minshall-Estey activity on Birge company was struggling to stay alive and exp amplifiers. The Minshall part was located in t Windham-Windsor Housing Trust apartment factory complex.

Minshall made the electronic component. Observers said that the product was timely and the collaboration failed. Estey then tried to develop a new product, but the company was going out of business in 1960.



Photos: top row, left to right:

-Minshall-Estey Company, Birge Street facing northwest.

-Minshall Organs with 2nd Floor complete, Birge Street, facing east

second row, left to right:

-Finished Minshall Organs in display room. northwest corner of building

-Work stations

-Electronics testing

(All photos BHS Brattleboro Reformer Photo Collection, 1950's)

What is the Scan

The Scanning Project began in our Street, several years ago with the addition of time we have scanned hundreds of negative collection and they will soon be available for Research Room. The *Brattleboro Reformer* our attention. We started with the 1950s and surprises. We have also scanned several other sharing more previously unseen views from

Takes us to Birge Street

Brookline Reformer negative collection show Birge Street in the 1950's when the Estey Company experimented with Minshall electronic organs in the former Daly Shoe building, now a restaurant building and offices, next door to the Estey Company building.

Estey built the organs. They were clever but poor quality, and the Estey Company stopped its own electronic instruments before

-John Carnahan



Finishing Project?

Research Room, at 230 Main Street, is the home of a negative scanner. Since that time, we have scanned many of the glass plates from our collection and made them available for the public to view in the Research Room. The negative collection gets much of its interest from the fact that we are finding some interesting items in our collections and look forward to sharing them with you as the project continues.



Did You Know...



Caruso House on Western Avenue. (BHS Brattleboro Reformer Collection, 1950s)



Massive main fireplace. (BHS Brattleboro Reformer Photo Collection, 1950s)

That a house on Western Avenue is thought to be the oldest house in Brattleboro? Records indicate it was first sold in 1789 but is thought to have been built in 1768. Many years later, in 1953, it was purchased and restored to its original condition by Joseph and Mary Caruso (see photo left). The contractor was Malcolm McVeigh. There were no nails in the ancient frame, it was held together by mortise and pegs. Of all the old features, Mr. Caruso was proudest of the chimney, built of small handmade brick. (see photo below-left)

The "Caruso House" name was still a part of the house when Mrs. Caruso died in 1972. She was known as Mrs. Maxine (Stellman) Caruso, a retired Metropolitan Opera singer, who for many years held the record for the largest number of performances in the Woman's Wing. Her singing career started as a choir member of the First Congregational Church of West Brattleboro.

Today, many years later, the house known as Brattleboro's oldest is still called the Caruso House.



Caruso House on Western Avenue. (Lee Ha, 2017)

Your Donations, Always Welcome!

Rick Hashagen gave us 7 boxes of "With Interest" booklets that originally resided in the Vermont National Bank--all in excellent condition. Photos and a folder of Canal Street School information was given by Anne Fines. 3 boxes of family photos and material of the Goddard family were donated by Carlene Momaney. Carol Farrington brought us a glass plate collection of the Douglas family and Spruce Street area. Material from the 1700s was donated by Julia Allen of Portland Oregon. One item is a 1786 deed of Samuel Wells -- Marvelous! (See page 1) Val Abrahamson brought us a 1950 AGR license plate. The Brattleboro Fire Department donated numerous items from the department. Sylvia Lyon brought us books, the Childs Windham County Gazateer and a roster of Vermont in WWI. *Many thanks to all!*

Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce Window: Our Turn

BHS has partnered with Zephyr Designs to produce the Chamber of Commerce window display beginning June 26. The themes are: Upper Main Street, Lower Main Street, the corner of Main & High Streets, Wells Fountain and the Common. A heartfelt thank you for the professional services donated by John Clements of Zephyr for the display design and construction. We hope you enjoy it.



Factoid

Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce was originally called the Brattleboro Board of Trade but voted to change the name in 1920. Its current name was born partly because many surrounding towns had recently done so and 95% of such U.S. organizations were known as Chambers of Commerce.

BAMS Weekly Podcast Producers Interviewed at WKVT

As the school year came to an end, Brattleboro Area Middle School students Ada Melton-Houghton, Chloe Givens and Ayden Brownell participated in a live interview with Chris Lenois at WKVT to discuss the radio show "This Week in Brattleboro History". The show is produced by BAMS students, with the help of BHS board members Joe Rivers and Reggie Martell, and airs every Thursday morning.

This year students also created podcasts and helped launch a successful Facebook page and Twitter account for the Brattleboro Historical Society. Over the course of the year, approximately 40 students participated in these Historical Society services for our community. We commend their efforts!



Photo Above: Back Row (L to R) Chris Lenois, Joe Rivers (BHS President), Front Row (L to R): Ada Melton-Houghton, Chloe Givens, Ayden Brownell.

(All photos by Reggie Martell, 2017)



Ada Melton-Houghton



Chloe Givens



Ayden Brownell

First it was a Hotel

We currently know it as the West Village Green, but what is the history of that big old apartment building sitting on the north side of Route 9 in the middle of West Brattleboro? Research has shown it has had a diverse life, and, oh, if only the walls could talk!



(left) Before the current building was constructed in 1901/02, the land seemed destined to be barren. John P. Sargent owned the original Glen House which burned down in 1883. This Melrose Hotel was built by the same John P. Sargent in 1889 and was considered a top hotel in Southern Vermont at the time. Sadly it burned beyond salvageability in 1902.

(BHS Photo Collection, early 1900s)



(left) Sargent again rebuilt the hotel on some of the same foundation and now called it the Melrose Inn, which is the building still standing. The Inn was run by several different people, but the biggest problem was always liquor. Whether served legally or illegally, the tax paying neighbors were against it.

Levi Strong bought the inn and for the first several years liquor troubles continued to follow the Melrose. Neighbors admitted the building was quieter than when John Sargent owned it, still no one was happy about having the hotel as a neighbor.

(BHS Postcard Collection, early

1900s)

Levi Strong seemed ever hopeful of running a successful hotel in West Brattleboro. However, plagued with problems from liquor and drunkenness, he eventually opened it as a Temperance Resort in 1904. (Vermont Phoenix, May 29, 1903)



The Melrose was advertised for sale again in 1904, but Levi Strong apparently retained ownership and ran it as a Temperance Resort. Mrs. Levi Strong took over running the Melrose Hotel, but in 1907 she sold the property and moved, with the Melrose Hotel sign in hand, to Linden Street where she hung the sign, extending accommodations to travelers in that part of town.

(right) In 1907 Mrs. William Leys and John Leys of Guilford bought the grand structure and after 4 months of extensive remodeling turned it into a hospital. It included state of the art operating rooms, a laboratory, enough room for many patients, and even an elevator. Dr. E. R. Lynch opened his hospital after moving from his Grove Street facility. The E.R. Lynch Hospital lasted only 18 months when financial backing was lost. After that it was known as the Melrose Hospital, and from 1913-1919 had various owners with Dr. E.R. Lynch as operating surgeon. Finally in 1920 Dr. Lynch himself bought the hospital.

(Melrose Hospital, BHS Postcard Collection, 1910s)



(right) By 1933 the building had been sold and transformed once again and was called "BonnyVale Rest," a tourist stop. For a time before 1940 the building was called Tally-Ho Inn.

Finally in 1941 Mrs. Harold Putnam bought and renovated it into 11 tastefully modernized apartments of the time. It was named the Village Green, a name which remains today.

**In 1944, BHS volunteer Harriet Ives moved from California to Brattleboro. where the Village Green was her first place of residence.*

-Lee Ha

(BHS Photo Collection, Harriet Ives, 1944)



Then and Now



The Melrose Hotel, Western Avenue, West Brattleboro, early 1900s. (BHS Postcard Collection, early 1900s)



Village Green Apartments, Western Avenue, West Brattleboro. (Lee Ha, 2017)

Union Hill: Who Thought Putting a Street Here was a Good Idea?

Have you ever traveled up or down Union Street Hill, especially during inclement winter weather, and wondered “Who ever thought putting a street here was a good idea?” I have wondered that many times and decided to do a little digging to find out - and much to my surprise - Union Street was not only a good idea, but a necessity for Brattleboro to grow and thrive.

First of all, let's imagine what travel in Brattleboro was like in the 1870s when the debate for a street to connect Western Avenue and Elliot Street began. Obviously, roads were dirt and horses and carriages were the mode of transportation. Much of Brattleboro's commerce was on Main and Elliot Streets. At the top of Union Street Hill was the beautiful summer home of Elie Charlier (currently Crowell Lot Playground), with pasture and woods (called Cave Bank) from

Western Avenue to Elliot Street.

Now imagine only 3 ways to get to town from the west. 1) High Street, which had a dangerously steep 7 degree grade down to Main Street, 2) Green/Church Streets, which had the sharp curve and steep grade of the Baptist Bank (so named because the Baptist Church stood on the corner of Elliot and Church Street) 3) Brook Road, now known as Williams Street, was easier as far as grade was concerned, but as it followed the Whetstone Brook, it was so crooked that teams with freight would often have a very difficult time passing. It was a longer route and needed much costly upkeep.

For several years before 1873, petitions were brought to the board of selectmen to have a road built connecting Western Avenue with Elliot Street through what was then known as Cave Bank. (see arrow on

map below) By 1873 a heated debate began to erupt when Edward Crosby spearheaded the push for the road through Professor Elie Charlier's property. Crosby and Charlier made their thoughts known in long, articulate letters to the Vermont Phoenix, one of Brattleboro's local newspapers. Crosby stood with the townspeople who needed a better route to town and work and the businessmen who needed safe and fast routes for freight to be delivered to town.

Charlier was an elite summer resident from NYC with loads of money and connections with the upper class of Brattleboro. He hired lawyers to fight the construction of a road over his property, but every point he and his lawyers made against the road was easily countered by Crosby's side:

--Make High Street 4.5 degree grade. (This would have been very expensive at the time, disrupt gas and water lines, and do much damage to property owners land at the top of the hill.)

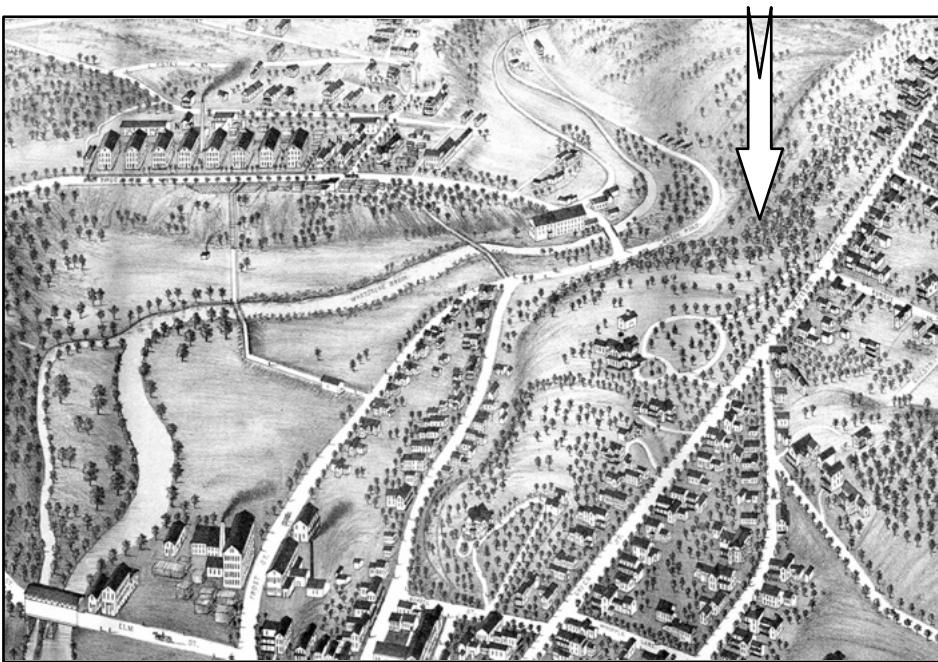
--Spend more money to fix Brook Street (this could never be made to haul freight safely)

--Brattleboro would appear as a "dead town" if people entered from the west end of Elliot Street.

--The connecting road could not be built due to the aqueduct on Western Avenue. (simply not true)

--Charlier accused the Crosby camp of trying to divert business from High/Main Street Corner to Elliot Street. (Elliot Street was often reported to be jammed with wagons)

Even after all the haggling in the early 1870s, the select board sided with Charlier resulting in only a town maintained foot path, used mostly by workmen going to and from Estey Organ Company to their homes on Western Avenue and beyond. (Note: Our own Harriet Ives remembers



Western Avenue runs diagonally from the upper right corner down. Notice Estey Organ Company in upper left. Workmen living on Western Avenue going to Estey Organ would have had to go to town and back out Elliot Street to get to work. (Early Maps of Brattleboro, David Allen, Bailey and Hazen Map, 1876)

stories of her grandfather using that path, even coming home daily for lunch.)

In 1876, the selectmen finally decided to grade High Street and Green Street, and make the curve down Baptist Bank more passable.

But the petitions continued for many years. In 1883, after yet another petition with the same arguments, the selectboard resurveyed the land, and eventually a hearing was set for November — but quickly postponed due to Charlier's ill health!

There is no mention of the road debate through 1884 but in May 1885 it was reported in local papers that Charlier's elite NYC school, which he founded, would be closed due to his ill health. Further, that same month, he sold his farm on Spofford Lake in New Hampshire.

Only 2 months later, in July 1885, Charlier's appeal resulted in "a compromise satisfactory to all parties concerned." The road would be built.

On November 27, 1885 the Vermont Phoenix had only one sentence, rather buried in other local news, "*The new street running from Western avenue to the Elliot street bridge — which has been named Union street—is now practically completed and open for travel.*" (See map above.)

Edward Crosby died in



Western Avenue runs across the top of map, Union Street was new. Clearly steep, but not nearly as dangerous as the other 3 routes to downtown Brattleboro from the west. (Early Maps of Brattleboro, David Allen, Burleigh Map of 1886)

Brattleboro only 5 years later, in 1890. He was well-known and well-liked in town, always having Brattleboro's growth and best interest at heart.

Professor Charlier broke up his land, selling building lots along Elliot Street and the land on the other side of Union Street. Due to his failing health he spent most of the following

winters of his life in the warmer climate of Italy, frequenting other European countries as well as northern Africa. He died in 1896, in Paris.

If it weren't for the persistence of Edward Crosby and his entourage, and perhaps for Elie Charlier's ill health, Union Street Hill might still be acres of woods called Cave Bank.

-Lee Ha



From Western Avenue facing south. This picture shows Union Street about 10 years after it was laid. Notice the embankment and depth of land taken to make the grade of the road passable. It now becomes obvious why the top of Union Street was so wide, to be navigable for teams of horses and freight. Modern times have proved this dangerous for pedestrians and Union Street has recently been made much narrower at the top. (Picturesque Brattleboro, 1896)



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Brattleboro, VT 05301

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



In the 1880s, Main Street was often lavishly decorated for celebrations including parades, Independence Day, the Valley Fair or the arrival of dignitaries. (Main Street looking south near corner of High Street, BHS Photo Collection, 1880s)