

# The Historical Herald

PO Box 514 Bartlett, New Hampshire 03812

Bartlett Historical Society's Newsletter

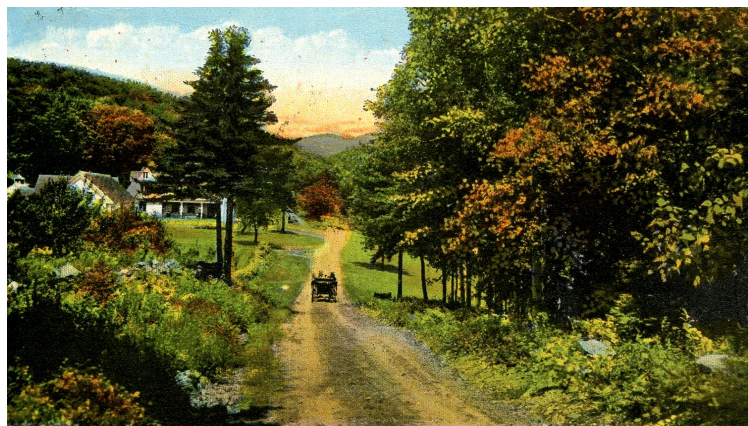
April Issue 2016

Our Mission is to preserve and protect all documents and items of historic value concerning the history of Bartlett, New Hampshire

## Up-coming Program

**May 2, 2016 "A History of The Notchland Inn"**

**Time: 7:00 p.m. Location: The Notchland Inn, Harts Location**



**Picture: The Road at Bemis, 1924**

**Ed Butler** and **Les Schoof** will present their popular program about the history of Crawford Notch. Stroll the grounds of the Notchland Inn starting at 6 p.m., the program starts at 7 p.m. This is a members only event, seating is limited and reservations are required.

**To make your reservation send email to [pfranklin@snet.net](mailto:pfranklin@snet.net)**

**It is with a sad heart** that we dedicate this issue of the Historical Herald to the Kearsarge Peg Company that was destroyed by fire on February 12, 2016. This marks yet another great loss to the history of Bartlett. Sad to say it will not be resurrected in Bartlett and no immediate plans have been made for the Bartlett property. See **our interview** with owner **Paul Soares** starting on page 8.

## President's Message:

While we are all very sad to have witnessed the tragic fire that destroyed Bartlett's cherished **Kearsarge Peg Mill**, we are honored to dedicate this issue of **The Historical Herald** to the mill's long and productive history. While this issue contains much of the historic events of the mill itself, we feel that the personal recollections from former workers and owners add those much sought after personal recollections that we are so fortunate to have.

Many of us remember the mill's distinctive noon lunch break whistle as well as the "curfew" whistle when all children knew they should be off the streets and better skedaddle home. If anyone reading this has any personal recollections that they would like to see added to the mill's history, please feel free to contact one of us; we'd love to hear from you.

On a couple of happier notes, the **Bartlett Historical Society Board of Directors** would like to thank the owners of **Joseph's Spaghetti Shed**, **Shannon Door Pub** and **Cabin Fever** for sponsoring fund raising events for our society at their restaurants. We encourage our members to show their appreciation by dining at these comfortable local places.

Also, we are pleased to announce that we have accomplished a major step in the project to renovate **St. Joseph Church** in Bartlett Village. On March 1, voters at the annual Bartlett School District meeting approved the school district granting a long term lease to the historical society for the church building. We continue to make progress on the largest project ever undertaken by our society.

*Norm Head, President*

## Friday February 12th; Another Piece of History Disappears in one Afternoon as The Kearsarge Peg Company is Destroyed by a Fast Moving Fire.

One of the world's most unusual manufacturers and a major part of Bartlett's town history was destroyed in one afternoon when a fire leveled the **Kearsarge Peg Company**. Three people were inside the building at the time of the fire but they all escaped un-hurt.

The fire was reported around 1:10 p.m. Friday February 12th



by a **custodian** from the nearby **Josiah Bartlett Elementary School**. Three people were inside the structure at the time of the fire and they managed to exit safely.

Firefighters from Tamworth to Jackson all responded to the scene, and water and weather were both challenges. The water had to be drafted from the Saco River and then shuttled, while the weather was down-right cold, with temperatures in the low double digits that froze firefighters and water alike.

**Gene Chandler**, who chairs the **Bartlett Board of Selectmen** called the destruction of the mill "a terrible loss for the history of the Town of Bartlett," recalling how the mill had at one time been one of the town's largest employers and also a supplier of saw dust to farms, like the Chandler's.

**Paul Soares** of Osterville, Mass., owner of the mill since 2001, when asked the cause, said "I think it was somehow sparked by a fan on the second floor, as all that stuff is 100 years old. Or a wall motor, also on the second floor, may have sparked and ignited the sawdust. There were three of our four dryers (for the pegs) operating at the time."

**Soares** said the wooden building was not insured, although he does carry liability insurance. He said his policy was canceled after he filed a claim due to damage from Tropical Storm Irene but stated he will try to put together a plan and get back up and running as soon as possible. Still standing is the tall brick smokestack that is being used as a cell tower by AT&T and Verizon, as were the generators that power them.

A \$25,000-\$30,000 shipment of product due to be shipped was destroyed in the fire. But Soares is trying to remain positive, saying he is glad no one was hurt. "This isn't the end — I'll come up with something," he said. *(Information for this article sourced from Conway Daily Sun, 02/16/2016 edition)*

## Bartlett Historical Society Officers & Directors

Norman Head, President — Bert George, Vice President  
Hanalore Chandler, Treas — Kathleen Howard, Curator  
Phil Franklin, Secretary  
Member Volunteer, Dave Eliason, Website  
Member Volunteer, Mike Chandler, Advice and Assistance

## Thank You for Donations Kathleen Howard, Curator

### GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Many thanks to those who have donated artifacts, papers or books including:

Toy Model of "Old Peppersass" (Cog Railway engine) donated by Bonnie Chadbourne

Town and City **Atlas** of the State of New Hampshire (1892) donated by Mary & Ron Nudd

1923 **Rand McNally map** — "Motor Trails to The Howard" donated by Paul and Shirley Taylor

**We always welcome and appreciate cash donations from our members and friends including:**

Evelyn Bailey - Rachael Brown - Gene Chandler

Elaine Copp - Alfred Cote - Phil and Sue Franklin

Carl Fuller - Deborah Gilmore -

Charles and Maureen Hanlon - Jon Hebert

Pat and John Higgins - George Howard

Cathie and Walt Keirans - Ray and Nancy Kelley

C. Sutton Marshall - Louise Merrill

Warren and Leslie Schomaker - Elois Sullivan

Paul and Shirley Taylor - Charlie and Arlene Zaccaria

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!**

Another memorable Fire, **January 1980**. The **Harry Rogers** barns and homestead gone in just a few hours.



## A Tribute to the Peg Mill

### Destroyed by fire February 2016

### 138 years—1878 to 2016

The company was established in 1865 in **Andover, NH** by **Gerry and Augustus Morgan and the Baker, Carr & Sons Co.** Sometime later Baker, Carr & Sons' interest appears to have been purchased by **Jacob R. Foster** and he along with the **Morgan brothers** moved the Kearsarge Peg Co. operations to **Bartlett, NH** in 1878. (A Portland Locomotive and Marine Engine Works steam engine, [with an 1878 manufacturer's nameplate] was the primary energy source for the factory operations up until its retirement in the 1980's. The steam engine is now currently housed and operational at the Maine State Museum in **Augusta, ME.**) The two **Morgan brothers** purchased **Mr. Foster's** interest in the business, and ran the business until a fire destroyed the plant in 1905.

At this time, the trademarks and goodwill of the business were purchased by **Edwin and George Foster** (sons of the Jacob mentioned above) who rebuilt and operated the plant from 1911 until it was purchased by **Stanley E. Davidson** and **Francis L. Brannen** in 1944. These two operated the Bartlett facility until Mr. Brannen's death in 1962, whereupon Mr. Davidson became the sole owner.

In 1966, the firm was incorporated in the State of New Hampshire with **Stanley E. Davidson Sr.**, as President and **Stanley E. Davidson Jr.** as Vice President. This arrangement continued until 1979 when Mr. Davidson Sr. retired and the corporation redeemed his stock, leaving Mr. Davidson Jr. as the sole stockholder of the corporation.

The principal business of the company at its inception was the manufacture of shoe pegs. **The Kearsarge Peg Co.** manufactured approximately seventy-five different sizes of shoe pegs. This product was used as a component of shoe manufacturing in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and replaced shoe nails, as a means for insuring a lasting bond between the last and sole of the shoe. It was considered superior to metal nails, in that over time the wood peg would draw moisture from the ambient atmosphere and swell, forming a lock fit between these two components. Shoe manufacturing along with textiles was a major segment of the economy of New England at this time, and there were dozens of plants, which made this product in competition with Kearsarge.


*Continued next page...*



*1910 Bartlett Peg Mill*



**YOUR BARTLETT HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS SUPPORTED ENTIRELY BY MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS. THE NEWSLETTER IS PAID FOR BY PEOPLE SUCH AS KATHLEEN SULLIVAN HEAD AND OTHERS. YOU WILL SEE THEM THROUGHOUT THE PUBLICATION. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR SUPPORT AS WELL, GET AN AD IN THE NEXT ISSUE !**



**104 Main Street • Route 16A**  
**PO Box 255**  
**Jackson, NH 03846-0255**  
[www.BadgerRealty.com](http://www.BadgerRealty.com)  
[Kathleen@BadgerRealty.com](mailto:Kathleen@BadgerRealty.com)



**Kathleen Sullivan Head**

*Certified Residential Specialist*

Direct 603-986-5932  
 Office 603-383-4407 x1  
 Direct Fax 603-687-0017

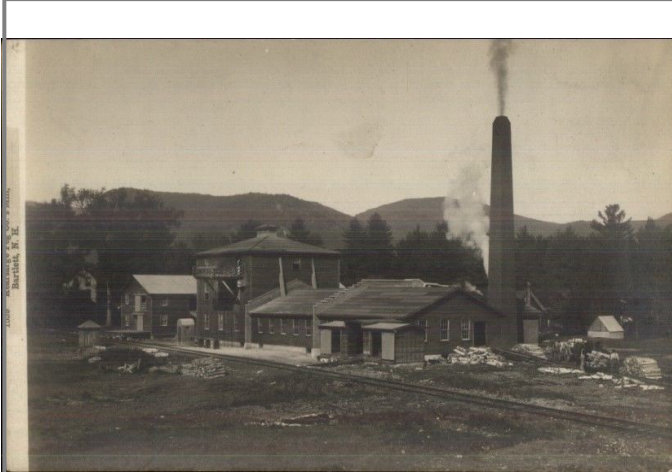
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**Thank you to Kathleen for helping to make this newsletter possible.**

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In its earlier years, Kearsarge exported heavily to the shoe industry in Norway, Germany, Australia and elsewhere. The last existing competitor in North America, the **Moore Peg Co., in Lisbon, NH** was lost in a fire in 1949.

This company (Moore) had been owned by the **Lupoline Corporation** in Bronx, New York which was a pioneer in the use of natural materials, including wood



*Peg Mill as it appeared about 1930*

pegs as a tumbling and final finishing medium for the plastics, jewelry and precision metalworking industries.

The use of pegs in shoe manufacturing came to an abrupt halt with the advent of the Second World War. (Exception: custom made climbing, skiing and cowboy boots). Not only did the company find that its export markets were now closed, but new developments in shoe manufacturing technology obviated the need for pegs to tie or lock the last and sole of shoes together.

**Lupoline**, under the director of its founder **Joseph Lupio** of pioneered dry barrel finish or tumbling techniques in the early part of the twentieth century, with some patents dating as early as the 1920's and 1930's. He found that "shoe pegs" made an ideal mass finishing media for smoothing and polishing plastic parts in rotary barrel finish equipment. This technology was quickly adapted by major manufacturers such as **Bausch & Lomb, Foster-Grant and the American Optical Co.** and others to replace tedious manual finishing methods that involved buffing. These large manufacturers of eyeglass frame and sunglass frame components were soon utilizing hardwood pegs in bulk, by the truck load for abrasive finishing and polishing operations. This continues to be the primary use for hardwood pegs and other hardwood preform shapes that the company manufactures to this day.

In the early 1980's the company management decided that there was a need to become more involved on a technical level with the finishing industry. As a result the **PEGCO Division** was instituted as a marketing and technical arm to more aggressively market hardwood media for other applications. It soon became apparent that there was a need to make PEGCO a technical resource for the finishing industry. Its focus became providing technical solutions to difficult edge and surface finish problems by process development in its "process laboratory" and offering turn-key equipment and abrasive supply packages as the solutions to these problems.



*Bartlett Peg Mill—1910*



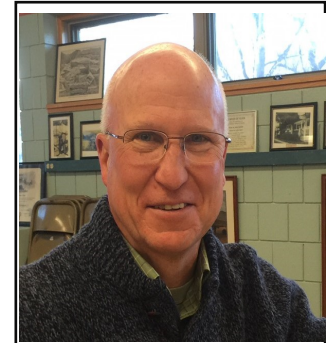
Thank you **Sky Valley Motel** for helping to publish this issue of the Historical Herald.



## Kearsarge Peg Mill - How Pegs Were Manufactured

By Phil Franklin, Bartlett Historical Society, Board of Directors, Secretary

Since the February 12, 2016 fire that tragically destroyed the Kearsarge Peg Mill, there has been a lot of interest in the peg mill operation. The question of how pegs were made comes up regularly. Peg manufacturing is a labor intensive, multistep process. It involved machines for debarking logs, sawmill saws to cut the logs, reciprocating V-shaped metal cutters in various sizes to shape the points on the pegs, other knives to split the pointed wooden blocks into individual pegs, dryers to dry the pegs and a finish screening process before finally bagging them for distribution to customers. Using information assembled from different sources, we've compiled a step-by-step narrative on the peg making process:



*Phil Franklin; Say "Hi" when you see him out and about.*



The Peg Mill in 1920

**Mill Yard and Ground Floor Operations:** It all starts in the "yard" of the peg mill where loggers stacked birch and beech logs cut from local forests. In the summer, these logs were kept wet with sprinklers spraying water on them to prevent drying and cracking of the wood. If the logs were longer than four feet in length when delivered, the logs were then cut into four foot "bolts." The bolts were fed into the sawmill area of the peg mill. In the winter, an extra step was required to thaw the bolts before getting them to the sawmill. The yard was managed by one man who handled all the wood and fed it into the mill. Once in the sawmill, the bolts were debarked. Before a "modern" debarking machine was installed in the early 1940's, workers used draw knives to manually cut the bark from the logs. Knots and metals, including bullets, in each log needed to be removed before the log was fed into the sawing operations.

After debarking, the log was run through a "slab saw" where a small slab was sliced from the log. Two men ran the debarker and slab saw. The log would then rest on that flat side, preventing it from rolling, as it was sectioned by a cross cut saw. The cross cut saw operation, run by two sawyers, would slice the log into "blocks", similar to a loaf of bread. Block thickness could be varied depending on the size of the peg being made that day. The round blocks were moved by conveyor to the Machine Room where they were stacked by two additional sawyers and carried to the open floor for "pointing" and "splitting." The cross cut sawyers and Machine Room sawyers would alternate positions every thirty minutes during the daily operation.



**Open Floor Pointing and Splitting Operations:** The Pointing and Splitting operations were done by a crew of (generally) sixteen women. To "point" the blocks, each block was fed into a roller where a pointing machine cut rows of V shaped grooves into the top of the block. Once the first set of grooves was completed, the block was manually turned 90 degrees and fed to a second pointing machine for where another set of grooves was cut into the top of the block. In the end, the block's top looked much like the surface of a wooden meat tendering mallet where each point will eventually become one end of a single peg. The plant had eight pointing machines with one women running each machine. The newly pointed block would then be carried to one of the two splitting tables. The first splitting table worker fed the blocks under a roller which moved the block into a fast moving splitting knife (e.g. 900 cycles / minute). This knife would split the block one row of points at a time. The split rows were caught by the next worker who remove the ends of the block, turn the block 90 degrees and then push the split rows to a worker feeding the next splitter machine. The second splitting knife would then split the rows of points into individually pointed pegs. Defective pegs were removed from the block while splitting knives whirled – watch out for your fingers! The pegs were then fed via a cup conveyor to wooden barrels on the third floor of the mill.



*Continued next page...*



*The Peg Mill and Bartlett & Albany Lumber Company. This scene is about 1896.*



**Drying and Finishing Operations:** The drying operation started pouring the barrels of pegs into hoppers so they could be gravity fed into rotary kilns on lower floors. Here, they were tumbled for about one and one half hours, continually cascading through a 200 degree airstream. Once dried, the pegs went into a finishing operation where they were fed into a rotating basket style screen where the pegs with the correct gauge (width) then were moved to a shaker screen to remove dust and other impurities. The finished pegs were then fed by two men into burlap bags to a net weight of 96 pounds per bag for storage before being shipped to customers. Before the era of burlap bags, pegs were loaded into wooden barrels that were made

at the mill.

**Closing Notes:** In my conversation with **Stanley Davidson**, **Mike Chandler** and **Carroll Hayes**, all agreed that the mill work was hard work. Giving credit to his workers, however, **Stanley Davidson** said “they were a breed of their own” and “they never complained” referencing the hard work and dangers faced on a daily basis by his employees. From the description of the manufacturing of pegs, one can see that it took a great deal of effort to produce a peg.

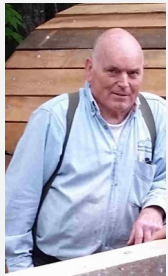
*Editor’s Note: Operational information on the making of the pegs was drawn from interviews with **Mike Chandler and Carroll Hayes**, both mill workers; **Stanley Davidson, Jr.** mill owner and General Manager from 1961 – 2002; and a presentation edited by David A. Davidson titled “Kearsarge Peg Co., Inc. – an Historical Perspective – 1865 – 2011.” Thank you to all of these people for their contributions to this article.*



1907 Bartlett Lumber Company Sawmill

## **Peg Mill Recollections:**

**Michael W. Chandler** - March 2016



### **Recollections of my work at Kearsarge Peg Mill in Bartlett**

Below are the recollection of my work at Kearsarge Peg Mill in Bartlett, NH; at that time owned by the Davidson Family.

I started working at the "Peg Mill" around 1969/1970 making \$1.25 per hour. This was a good paying job in Bartlett at that time. My first week there I worked for **Bill Hodgkins**, doing odd jobs around the mill. One of things I did was to hook up an inter-com system between the Office and the Machine Room. I did several other things as well as filling in other positions for other workers as needed. Training for a job in the mill was all "on the job" so you needed to learn quickly.

In a short while I went to work with **Shine (Elwood) Henry** – Elois Sullivan's father- in the Finishing Room where we were screening, polishing, and bagging the pegs. We also had to stencil the bags as the pegs were sold under different brands and sizes. After the pegs were bagged, we stacked them in the warehouse by size and brand, ready to be shipped. Once the transportation company arrived, we loaded the bags of pegs onto the respective trucks – loading anywhere from 5 bags to 400 bags per day (about 96 pounds per bag). Often I worked several nights per week for 4-6 hours drying and bagging pegs. We needed to work nights to keep up with the daily production as the drying process took longer than a normal day shift. If there were two production shifts, we would work a partial third shift to complete the drying and bagging work from the day's production.

The finishing and bagging operation needed two workers so I worked with another man who tended the boiler for the steam engine that ran the mill and who would help with the bagging process when he was set with the boiler. The peg drying operation was done by blowing the heated air from the boiler through the pegs as they were screened. The boiler burned wood scraps from the mill plus sawdust so this was a self-contained operation.

The mill produced a lot of sawdust plus a large amount of wood scrap. What we didn't use for the boiler was given to people in town. The sawdust was used by farmers for animal bedding and the scrap wood was used for home heating. I used to load scrap wood into a pickup truck and deliver it for free to people in town.

After doing these jobs for a while, I took over the yard, becoming my own boss. I had to load and unload trucks which brought the raw materials – birch and beech logs with a large Prentiss loader. Logs would come to the mill from different sources including local people who would bring on small truckloads of logs in exchange for cash, sawdust or wood scraps. I was responsible for scaling the incoming logs. We needed to get logs that had small to almost no heart-wood because the heart-wood did not make a good peg. We also rejected hollow logs (no centers) because you could not form the wooden blocks needed to make pegs from hollow logs. In the yard, the logs were cut into 4 foot lengths ("bolts") before they were fed into the sawmill at the plant. The guy who did the cutting used a heavy chainsaw but could not sharpen the teeth on the chain so he paid me on the side to sharpen the chainsaw chippers. *Continued next column...*

I was also responsible for grinding and filing (setting) all the saw blades in the sawmill. This included the slab saw and the cross cut saw.

I fed this wood supply to the mill for debarking and sawing into wood disks to be processed into pegs. In the winter, we needed to thaw the logs before they were fed into the mill. We did this by placing the bolts into canvas covered concrete drying bins and pumping steam from the steam engine into the bins to thaw the logs. In the summer, we needed to spray water on the logs to keep them from drying and cracking.

I handled the maintenance in the sawmill by removing wood scraps, sawdust (to be used in firing the boiler) and the maintenance on all the yard vehicles and equipment. In the winter time I handled the plowing of the yard and mill premises.

During the time I worked there 16 female machine operators (splitter and pointer) and 13 male workers in different positions, from sawyers to dryers and other jobs as earlier mentioned. This crew made up the work force. Two or three times during my employment, the peg mill operation ran on two shifts with a partial third shift. This third shift was so we could get caught up on the peg drying and finishing process because pegs were made faster than they could be dried and finished. I was a part of that two man drying crew. The demand for pegs had gotten very high since the eye glass industries, (i.e. Bausch and Lomb) were in their "hay day" as was the pegs use for polishing plastic products.

During my time at the Peg Mill, to the best of my knowledge, there only was one other peg mill operating in the world and that was in Germany. In the days long before my time, pegs were mostly used in the shoe industry.

Working at the peg mill was hard work. The mill had three whistle blows per day, at 7:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. and Bartlett Village lived off of those whistles. We had a 15 minute break in the morning and another 15 minutes in the afternoon but, if our work was completed on a Friday afternoon, for example, we would occasionally leave early and go fishing. Working at the mill had its dangers as there were several unguarded saws and knives running while the plant was in operation. Unfortunately, there were accidents on occasion.

I worked for **Stanley Davidson, Jr.** His father, Stanley, Sr., who ran the plant from 1944 to 1962 would occasionally come up from Boston to visit the mill. He would drive his Porsche and, if something needed to be fixed on it, he would have me do the job.

Below listed is the make up the Peg Mill's work force during my time there:

1 Boiler Operator; 2 Finish Room Operators; 1 Yard Man; 1 Overall Mill Foreman; 2 Debarkers; A total of 16 Women and 13 Men; 4 Sawyers; 16 Machine Operators (female); 1 Mill Machine Maintenance Worker; 1 Dryer Room Operator

I left Kearsarge Peg Co in 1980 to start my own business. When I left, I was making \$2.35 per hour.

## Kearsarge Peg Company

### Interview with Paul Soares, Current Owner

03/16/2016

By Phil Franklin, Bartlett Historical Society,  
Board of Directors, Secretary

The morning sun was melting away a layer of clouds on March 16, 2016 as I first met **Paul Soares** at the site of the burned Kearsarge Peg Company (a.k.a “the peg mill”). Standing at the mill site, there continued to be a slight acrid odor coming from the remnants of the mill still waiting to be removed from the site. What was a three story post and beam building is now a few piles of charred timbers, scattered bricks, the original Franklin boiler and a chimney that hosts cell service antennas.

We talked about what attracted Paul to the peg mill. He first came to the mill as a business consultant to help **Stan Davidson** revitalize his business. Paul described himself as a forensic accountant and business “turnaround specialist.” In 2001, during his second engagement at the mill Stan approached Paul and explained that he felt the need to move on from the business. He told Paul that on the back of his business card he had written the name of the one person he felt could save the company. Taking the card, Paul turned it over and saw his name. After some thought, Paul decided to purchase the mill and on June 21, 2001 became the owner of the Kearsarge Peg Company.

Paul confided that things were a bit rough when he took over the mill. The mill was in tough financial shape. There was a large worker’s compensation claim looming and within about two months of his purchase, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks occurred causing orders to virtually stop for a period of time. Paul continued making pegs but focused more on the polishing process and “mixed media” polishing agents that were sold to customers doing their own polishing operations. Also, he instituted several improvements to the accounting and management side of the operation. Slowly the business started to turn around.

Paul also enhanced a third business focus he called “job shopping.” With job shopping, products to be polished were sent to the peg mill and the polishing operation occurred here in Bartlett. This proved to be a very successful business move. Products polished at the mill included eyeglass frames for different eyewear firms, all of the fishing lures for two of the three lure makers in the US and the racing car gears for an Indy 500 racing team.

Paul said he was soon planning to revitalize and modernize the peg production process by installing modern computerized equipment to the operation, replacing the equipment still in use from the 1800’s and early to mid-1900’s. He had located new sawmill equipment, was having pointer machines rebuilt (these were removed from the mill years ago and stored outside the mill), and had found a company to build the splitters. Unfortunately, the fire stopped that plan.

*Continued from previous column*

When the fire struck, the mill was stocked with logs for making more pegs, pegs and polishing media waiting for delivery, and was gearing up for production runs for outstanding orders. He had 10,000 fishing lures in the mill waiting to be polished. He also had many bills to pay for the purchase of these supplies and was responsible for his customers fishing lures. To address this financial shortfall after the fire, Paul basically started a salvage operation, selling off the metal from the plant for scrap, selling a furnace, the logging truck and looking for buyers for other items with salvage value. Paul has vowed to pay all of his debts, assuring his creditors that they will be reimbursed. A frustrating problem that Paul encountered was thieves coming onto the site and looking for valuables to steal and sell for their own profit. He related a story of confronting **two young men** at 11:30 p.m. one night as they picked through the rubble.



*Kearsarge Peg Mill—Winter 1952  
Photo courtesy Alan Eliason (1921-2014)*

After the fire, many things happened in rapid succession. First, Paul said that he received many calls from people near and far offering their support. He expressed his gratitude for the support. Second, he started looking for a way to get back in business and cover his outstanding debts. Orders for mixed media and job shopping work continued to come in despite the fire. Paul wanted to restart his business here and the State of NH was offering an economic relief package but only at a site in **Coos County**. This site was the former Wausau paper mill in **Groveton, NH**. In the end, he turned down the deal because two employees, critical to the business, felt this was too far for them to travel on a daily basis. Paul then entered into an agreement with **another US firm** with which he was already doing business. They are purchasing the rights to the peg manufacturing process, mixed media production and job shopping business. Paul felt this deal would be completed soon. Paul will retain the mill property but has no immediate plans for its use. With the mill gone, the only original buildings left on the Bartlett property are the machine shop and coopers barn.

*Continued next page....*



....Continued from previous page **Interview with Paul Soares, Current Owner**

When asked about key employees, Paul mentioned three people. The first was **Fred Berube**. A 35 year employee, Fred was the mill's polishing expert. He knew the polishing media formulas and was the man to turn to for determining how to polish items to the highest levels of quality. Next was **Lester Levesque**, another 35-year employee. Over the past few years, Lester ran the peg manufacturing operation from start to finish. Finally, **John Cook**, a 50-year employee, was their mechanical and maintenance expert. Paul said of John, "he could fix anything." **The Cook's** lived in a building at the mill but have had to find other accommodations because their water and power, which came from the mill, was shut off after the fire. Paul said repeatedly that the people were and are the most important asset of the mill and added that he always enjoyed working with them.

We talked briefly about important things lost in the fire. Aside from the "one of a kind" machinery and belt drives that ran the peg operations, the mixed media formula book with all of the polishing media formulas burned. He said that it's fortunate that Fred (Berube) remembers most of the formulas but this was a big loss. Second, Paul mentioned that he had amassed a history of the mill, including the original drawings of the floor plan for the mill from 1865 and documentation of the firm's European business dealings. This history, all on paper, was in his office and destroyed when the fire ripped through that area of the mill. Finally, all of the company records were lost. Ironically, Paul was doing a backup of the company's computer server in his office as the fire struck. Paul is reconstructing these records now by reviewing online bank statements and other items on his laptop, which escaped the fire.

As I left Paul, he thanked me for my interest in the mill as well as expressing his appreciation for the support he has received from the people of Bartlett. His smile and positive, confident demeanor left me with the impression that he would make something good come out of this situation. He noted that this was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mill and he had hoped to host a reunion, of sorts, for past mill employees to celebrate this milestone. He noted that he still may do this even though the mill is now a lost part of Bartlett history.

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#### **Kearsarge Peg Mill — Interview with Stanley Davidson, Jr. 03/07/2016**

By Phil Franklin, Bartlett Historical Society, Board of Directors, Secretary

In our effort to develop the story of the Kearsarge Peg Company, a.k.a. the "Peg Mill", Norman Head, President of the Bartlett Historical Society made contact with a member of the **Davidson family**. Through this contact, Stanley "Stan" Davidson, Jr. agreed to help us with recollections of his time as the General Manager of the peg mill. My conversation with Stan took place on March 7, 2016 by telephone from Stan's North Carolina home.

Stan started by telling me that his father, **Stanley Davidson, Sr.** of Boston, MA and business partner, **Francis Brannen** of Berlin, NH bought the peg mill from the **Foster Brothers (Edwin and George)** of Plymouth, NH in 1944. **Stanley, Sr.** was an owner of the **Dana Place Inn** in Jackson and worked at the **radio station** on the top of Mount Washington. **Mr. Brannen** was a contractor in Berlin. Both Mr. Brannen and Mr. Davidson would visit the mill on occasion. The mill was operated for several decades by **Fred Hodgkins** and before him, his father **True Hodgkins**. The Davidson / Brannen partnership lasted until 1962 when Mr. Brannen died and Stanley, Sr. approached his son, Stanley, Jr. (Stan) about joining the company. Stan moved into the Mount Washington Valley area and started working at the mill in 1962. He was no stranger to the valley though as he spent his youthful summers working and staying at the Dana Place Inn. Stanley, Sr. retired in 1979 and, at that point, Stanley, Jr. was the head of the mill.

Stan said that he originally thought he would get into the hotel and tourism business but family mill business changed all of that. When he came on board at the mill he decided to learn the operations at the mill because "you could not run the mill from the office; it had to be run from the plant." With that work ethic, Stan learned every job in the plant by doing every job in the plant. His teacher was **Fred Hodgkins**. He admitted that he didn't spend a lot of time at each station but did spend enough time to know how the peg process worked and how the polishing process worked also.

When Stan joined the plant, he recognized the need to make some changes to improve the working conditions in the plant, "to minimize the labor effort." To that end, he bought and installed a hoist to lift the heavier "bolts" of wood (4' logs) to make it easier for the workers to get logs into the sawmill area. He also installed a second hand debarking machine to replace the old debarker that was installed in 1944. He said that these installations improved the operations at the sawmill end of the plant. He also bought some second hand pointing equipment from a mill in Lisbon NH and had this machinery installed. Again, an improvement in operations. With all of these improvements, the work was still labor intensive and had its share of dangers.

*Continued next page..*

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**Kearsarge Peg Mill**  
**Interview with Stanley Davidson, Jr.**

When **Stan** joined the mill operation, the use of pegs along with polishing creams (polishing media) was central to their support of the polishing business. Initially, pegs were used to polish eye glass frames. Then the polishing and deburring operation expanded to include items such as fishing lures, jewelry and other metal items. The polishing operation would occur in tumbling barrels where the items to be polished were placed in the barrel with the polishing media; the barrel would be rotated and the media would polish and deburr the product in the barrel. The idea of polishing with pegs was invented by Mr. Joe Lupo at a competing mill. The idea soon took off in the industry with better polishing technologies being invented even up to current times where many different items, from plastics to jet engine parts are polished and deburred using polishing media such as pegs, ground corn cobs and crushed walnut shells.

The eye glass business was the impetus to put the mill back into full time operation from the WWII era where the mill was operated at half capacity due to declining markets and the change in shoe manufacturing away from the use of pegs to nailing and better stitching. **Stan** said that the markets for the mill were not only in the American eye glass firms such as **Bausch and Loam**, **American Optical** and **Foster Grant**, but also in European markets of Austria and Germany. Eventually the European markets went away as mills and polishing operations were started by independent firms in Europe. **Stan** said that he was thinking about changing his plant equipment to the European models as they were producing good quality pegs and seeing quality polishing results with the European equipment but decided that the cost versus the benefit were not enough to make the change.

As we talked about the design of the mill, **Stan** said that "the original people who set up the mill were geniuses." The mill worked by belts that were turned off of a central shaft that was powered by a steam engine. The speed of the shaft and the belts turning off the shaft needed to be just right but with people like **Fred Hodgkins** and others, they knew the balance of speed and belt tensions to make the mill run efficiently. He said that at one time, engineers were brought into the plant to streamline the operation but left without making a change. Maintenance of the bearings in the machinery was critical. **Stan** believes that some electrical power was brought into the plant in the 1930's to run the lighting and possible the debarking machine but steam was the key energy driver. We talked about the marketing that occurred for his peg products and polishing operations. **Stan** said that when he first arrived at the plant, the pegs and polishing products were sold to distributors who dealt with the various firms consuming the products.

*Continued next column...*

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Over time, however, the distributors went away and they were dealing directly with their customers. As consumer tastes changed and eye glass frames, for example, went from plastic to metal in the 1970's and 1980's, the peg company business suffered and other markets were explored. As new markets were found, the need for producing different shaped pegs also came into the spotlight. For example, they found that pearl buttons could be polished by tumbling but they received a better finish if polished by cubes versus the traditional pegs.

I asked if the company had developed any patents on their products but **Stan** said that they started thinking about patenting things and they did have trade secrets but no patents were ever sought. He admitted that they did analyze the products of other polishing operations but there were so many alternatives in polishing media that they just stuck with their own methods.

As time passed and the twentieth century was coming to a close, **Stan** saw the business changing again. The peg business was dropping off and markets were changing yet again. He decided that after 40 years in the business, it was time to retire. So, in 2002, he sold the Kearsarge Peg Company to **Paul Soares**, an entrepreneur from MA. His final comment to in the interview was that "he gives credit to the people who worked there." He appreciated the fact that besides the railroad in Bartlett, the peg mill was a central part of the town and the people of the town made it all possible.

My thanks to **Stan Davidson** for spending his valuable time with me in this enjoyable conversation.



**Thank You Kate & True North Vet for  
 helping make this publi-  
 cation possible. (True  
 North is just up the Street  
 from Bear Peak.)**

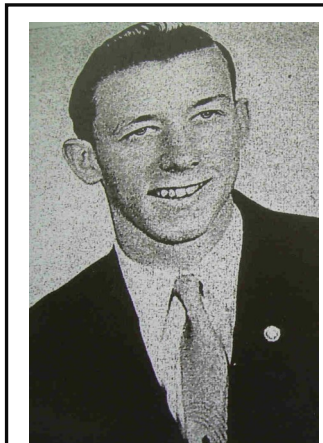


## Kearsarge Peg Mill

### Interview with Carroll Hayes, Mill Worker

03/18/2016

By Phil Franklin, Bartlett Historical Society,  
Board of Directors, Secretary



Carroll Hayes; 1956

Carroll Hayes was a part-time worker at the Kearsarge Peg Mill and had the distinction of being the second shift foreman while the mill was running two production shifts around 1967. Aside from running the second shift peg operation, Carroll also performed the peg drying and bagging operations. He said he and another man would move the 96 pound bags to the warehouse lifting them together but occa-

sionally, they would have contests to see who could create the largest pile of filled peg bags by single handedly throwing the bags into higher and higher piles. Carroll thought he reached a maximum of about eight high and also wondered aloud if that is the reason he has a bad back today!

Carroll did other jobs including cleaning the large Franklin boiler on Sunday's since there was no production on Saturday or Sunday. He cleaned all of the accumulated wood dust off the beams in the drying and finishing rooms, an insurance company requirement to prevent spontaneous combustion. He also worked in the pointing room performing several jobs supporting the women doing the pointing and splitting of blocks into pegs. One task in particular he did was to sharpen the point cutters.

Talking about how the mill was part of the Bartlett community, he recalled the different whistles signaling the start, mid-point and end of the work day. He said that many of the mill workers lived close enough to the mill that at lunch time, they could walk home to eat. He noted that the mill, along with the railroad, were central to the vitality of Bartlett Village. *Continued next column...*



Thank-You **Heavens Ski Shop and Heavens Garden**. Find us at Patch's Marketplace...Starting in May you can **also** find Jono Managing the **Linderhoff Country Club** in Glen. Stop by, say hello, play some golf, swim, have some lunch !

....continued from previous column

A trustee of the Congregational Church of Bartlett, Carroll mentioned that in the 1890's, the owners of the mill donated a large round stained glass window to the church. That window can still be seen at the head of the church today. Quoting from a book titled, *A History of the Congregational Church of Bartlett*, we find that the church was completed in 1896 "resplendent with its lovely stained glass window in place, a gift from the Morgan brothers, owners of the Peg Mill ...". The Morgan brothers, Gerry and Augustus, owned and ran the mill from 1865 to 1905.

Carroll also recalled some of the pranks that were played at the mill. The most memorable was about Bill Hodgkins, the daytime foreman, and his broken pencil. Bill measured the wood on the logging trucks coming to the mill yard. He stored his pencil and paper on a shelf near the debarking machine. Someone started breaking the point on Bill's pencil. He would have climbed on the logging truck before noticing the broken point forcing him to climb down, go to the office to sharpen the pencil and then get back to the truck. After three or four broken pencil points, Bill let it be known that if the prankster was caught, he would be fired. In the end, the pencil and paper found a new resting place, the prankster remained anonymous and the debarkers needed to find someone else to be the subject of their pranks.

Carroll spoke fondly about his time working at the mill saying that Stan Davidson, Jr. was "a prince of a guy." He said it was hard work but no harder than any other job on the railroad or cutting timber in the forest.

**Your \$40. ad will be most appreciated. Contact any of the directors to make arrangements.**

### **YOUR BUSINESS NAME COULD BE HERE:**



Back in the 1950's, Field Day was held at Sky Valley during July. Most of the towns people attended. It was a carnival of sorts complete with a Miss Sky Valley contest. This particular winner is Donna Chappee, perhaps 1954. *Photo Courtesy of Bob Duncan Studios*

# SAVE THE CHURCH



**Long Term Lease Approved:** On March 1, 2016, the voters attending the annual Bartlett School District meeting voted unanimously to allow the School District to enter into a **long term lease arrangement** with the **Bartlett Historical Society** for the **St. Joseph Church** building. This is a major step in our effort to convert the building into our renovated headquarters and museum. Final details of the lease agreement will be worked out soon.

**Asbestos and Lead Survey:** We have engaged a NH environmental firm to do a survey to tell us the exact levels of asbestos and lead that are in the building. Additionally, they will provide a **remediation plan** for these elements. Samples of flooring and paint have been taken and we are awaiting the labora-

tory report from these samples. This firm is also looking into a mold remediation process for the building.



**Preliminary Occupancy Limit Determined:** We asked **Bartlett Fire Chief, Pat Roberts**, to review the building and provide an unofficial occupancy estimate. Pat concluded that a preliminary number of **100 people** could be in the building at the same time. This fits nicely into our vision for the building. An official occupancy number will be determined after renovations are complete.

**Next Steps:** The most significant next step is the start of a **capital campaign to raise renovation and endowment funds for the church project**. Once we have final estimates on the renovation work, we will launch our fund raising effort. **The endowment funds** will be used to defray the cost of operating the building once we have completed the renovation. **More information on the fund raising effort will be forthcoming.**

## Ed & Les of The Notchland Inn

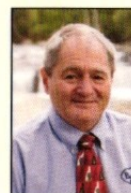


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104 Main Street • Route 16A  
 PO Box 255  
 Jackson, NH 03846-0255  
[www.BadgerRealty.com](http://www.BadgerRealty.com)  
[Norman@BadgerRealty.com](mailto:Norman@BadgerRealty.com)



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**If it happened in Bartlett, you can probably find it at our extensive web-site:**

**[www.BartlettHistory.Org](http://www.BartlettHistory.Org)**

## Mr. Elwood Dinsmore 1899-1984

(The gas pump shows 13 gallons for \$6.05)

Elwood was the brother of **Helen Hayes**, another famous person in Bartlett history. Here is **Elwood Dinsmore** at his gas station in Bartlett in 1972. At the time of this photo Elwood owned the gas station for 48 years. Elwood worked for the **Maine Central Railroad Mountain Division** for 50 years and 5 months. He was a mechanic working out of the Bartlett yard.

Elwood was known as the "One Man Wrecking Crew"; Elwood operated the Towns only Wrecker Service, towing crashed up cars or pulling folks out of a ditch. He remembers when 10 to 12 trains passed through Bartlett. At the end of his retirement he saw only 2 trains a day pass through Bartlett. He was asked once "What was the most severe condition you ever worked under?". El-



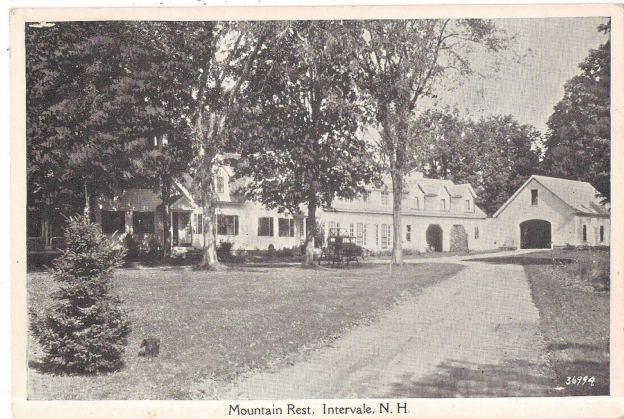
wood answered..."Back in mid winter of 1954 I went up to the **Wiley Brook Trestle** to take a side rod off a steam engine. The Wind was blowing a gale, and we were in the middle of the trestle, someone went to the **Wiley Section house** to see what the temperature was...it was **48 below ZERO!**".

Elwood's **Sunoco** gas station and garage is (was) located directly across the street from today's **Bart's Deli**. He and his second wife, **Ruth**, lived in the rooms above the garage. Before **Bart's Deli** there was a Restaurant called **Hansel and Gretel** in the same location. When Ruth saw what a great business they did in their restaurant she decided she should have a restaurant also and built the small building on the east side of the garage. It only operated a couple of years under her management. It later became The **Copper Kettle** operated by **Elaine MacManus**.

\_\_\_\_\_\*\*\*\*\_\_\_\_\_

## The New England Inn at Intervale has a Long History; Only a Small Part is Revealed here:

The Eastern Slope of the White Mountains was still a vast, untamed wilderness when the original farmhouse was built on this site by **Samuel Bloodgood**, in 1809. The Bloodgood farm was famous for its hospitality from the first and remained so during Samuel's life and those of his sons and grandsons.



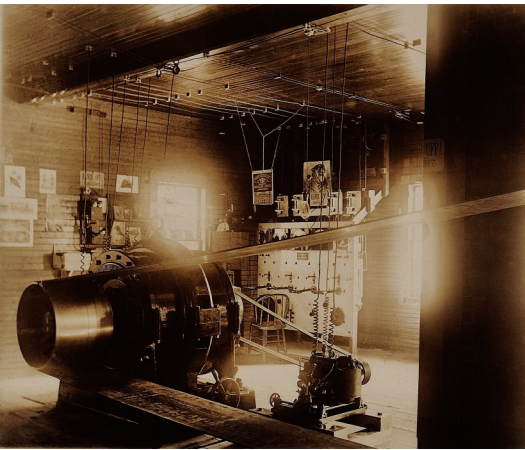
Mountain Rest. Intervale, N. H.

Among the third generation, **Lyle Bloodgood** had been a handsome, young and talented **actor**. Returning in later life after extensive travels, he often regaled his guests with tales of the state. His most exciting story was an eye-witness account of **Lincoln's assassination**. He had been one of the performers at **Ford's theater in Washington** on that fatal night. It was some years before this, in the late 1830s, that the farm had in fact become an inn, the owners setting a sign at the roadside to invite the traveling public to their hearth and board.

\_\_\_\_\_\*\*\*\*\_\_\_\_\_

## GOODRICH FALLS HYDRO- ELECTRIC PLANT 1935:

BUILT BY **EDWIN MOODY**, THE OWNER OF BLACK MOUNTAIN SKI AREA, AND **PHIL ROBERTSON** OF THE JACKSON ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT, PRIMARILY FOR THE BENEFIT OF POWERING **JACKSON VILLAGE** AND **BLACK MOUNTAIN SKI AREA**.



The **Goodrich Falls hydroelectric Project** (the “Goodrich Falls project”) presently is owned and operated by the **Goodrich Falls Hydroelectric Corporation**, a New Hampshire corporation formed in 1977 for the sole purpose of owning and operating the Goodrich Falls project. The history of development, ownership and operation of the Goodrich Falls project is described below.

The Goodrich Falls project was constructed in the early 1900’s by **Edwin Moody**, the owner and operator of the **Black Mountain Ski Area** and **Phil Robertson** of the local electric department in Jackson, NH. To attract skiers to Black Mountain, which at that time was known as **Moody’s**, Edwin Moody and local inventor, **George Morton**, constructed one of the **first ski lifts** in NH. The Goodrich Falls project was constructed in concert with the lift in order to provide daytime power for the lift and nighttime power for the skiers staying in **Moody’s lodge**. Ownership of the project was transferred to the Goodrich Falls Hydroelectric Corporation in 1977 and was operated as an unlicensed facility until its application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for an exemption under Part I of the Federal Power Act.

On January 8, 2001, the Goodrich Falls Hydroelectric Corporation (“GFHC”), filed an application to exempt the existing, unlicensed, 550-kilowatt Goodrich Falls project



from the licensing requirements set forth under Section 408 of the Energy Security Act and Part I of the Federal Power Act (FPA). The project is located on the Ellis River, in the town of Bartlett, Carroll County, New Hampshire. On March 14, 2002, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the “FERC”) issued an Order Granting Exemption from Licensing (the “Exemption”) for a project 5MW or less, to GFHC for the continued operation

of the Goodrich Falls project, FERC Project No. 11870 (see Appendix 1-1). Included in the exemption were additional measures to protect, mitigate adverse impacts to, and enhance project-related environmental resources.

Construction of the Goodrich Falls project was **completed in 1935** when first power was generated. The project has operated successfully since initial power was generated in 1935.

Source: a web-site belonging to the Goodrich Falls Hydro Co.

*The web-site was in existence several years ago, but seems to have disappeared recently.*



## Hotel once occupied the summit of Mt Kearsarge.

In 1845 a hotel building was erected on Mount Kearsarge by **Caleb and Nathaniel Frye, John Dana, and Moses Chandler**. It was used for several years and then fell into disuse. In 1868 it was bought, renovated, and operated as a hotel by **Andrew Dinsmore**. During the 1870's it was

run by **A.A. and J.W. Whitaker**. A bridle path up the mountain made it accessible by horseback.

After a beating wind blew the building down in 1883, it was replaced by a shack. Although there were plans for a railroad running to the top of the mountain, and in 1885 the **North Conway-Mount Kearsarge Railway Corporation** was actually organized, these plans were never realized. In 1902 the building and site were purchased by the **Appalachian Mountain Club**, and mountain climbing became a sport in this area. Today the summit and approach are part of the **White Mountain National Forest** and the present building is a fire-lookout station.

### Old hotel once stood on top of Kearsarge Mountain

To the editor:  
I thought the enclosed picture of the old hotel on top of Kearsarge Mountain North would be of interest to your local readers. The hotel was built in 1869 by Andrew Dinsmore and named the "Kearsarge House." The original summit road, which was really a horse path, was, chartered by the New Hampshire Legislature in 1864 and was built by locals Joseph Nute and Steve Eastman.

On Nov. 12, 1883 a severe storm blew the hotel down the mountain. Following this Mr. Dinsmore gathered up lumber from the debris and built a smaller hotel in its place on the summit. In 1883 the New Hampshire Legislature approved an Act of Incorporation of the North Conway and Mount Kearsarge Railroad. In spite of time extensions granted in 1887, 1893, 1899, 1901, 1903 and 1905, the railroad was never built. In 1902 Caroline Clay of Chatham,



The hotel on top of Mount Kearsarge in the 1800s.

gave 10 acres on top of Kearsarge Mountain to the Appalachian Mountain Club. The A.M.C. gave permission to use the hotel for a fire lookout and for a phone line to be built to the summit.

P.S. I was born and raised at the Seavey homestead at the foot of Kearsarge Mountain and in 1945, at age 17, I was a fire lookout in the old cabin/tower. My grandfather, Walter Seavey, was the lookout for 21 years in the early 1900s — going up and down the mountain daily.

Alton W. Seavy Jr.  
Trumbull, Conn.

This Letter to the Editor, at left, appeared in the Conway Daily Sun, December 2010.

Thanks to **Matty B's Mountainside Café** at Attitash for helping us publish this newsletter.

**Matty B's**  
BARTLETT, NH  
MOUNTAINSIDE CAFÉ

# *The Historical Herald*

**You can find all these story's and hundreds of other topics at our web-site:**

**BartlettHistory.Org Take a look sometime.**

## **From the files:**

**208 years ago:** According to Georgia Drew Merrill's History of Carroll County in 1808 **Obed Hall, John Weeks, William Pitman** were elected selectmen; **Levi Chubbuck**, clerk; **David Woodbury** collector of schoolhouse tax in Lower Bartlett. It was voted to appropriate a house in Bartlett for the use of those who see fit to take the **smallpox by inoculation**, to be no expense to the town. Road on line between Conway and Bartlett from southwest corner of Chatham established. The electors of President of the United States get 67 votes; only ticket voted for, that headed by John Langdon.

**108 years ago:** School at **Goodrich Falls**, closes March 13, after a very successful term taught by **Miss Idella Abbott**. Miss Abbott has taught a number of schools, but none where she was more loved as a teacher than at this school. There is not one scholar but what will be sorry to have her go, and all join in chorus for her to come back.

An entire change in the board of selectmen, **G. K. Howard, F. H. Robinson and Fred Pitman, all republicans**, are the town fathers this year.

**56 years ago:** Remember the **Eastern Slope Signal Newspaper**? You can find some of the issues at BartlettHistory.Org.

**11 years ago:** In the summer of 2005 a small group of individuals interested in collecting and preserving the history of our town gathered to create the articles of association and to adopt the following mission statement: to preserve and protect all documents and items of historic value concerning the history of the town of Bartlett, NH. With those two business items accomplished, **the Bartlett Historical Society was founded.**

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Bartlett Historical Society

PO Box 514

Bartlett, NH 03812

STAMP

**TO:**