

## A brief history of the Village of Hartland, Wisconsin Hartland Historical Society

A natural spring provided an ideal camping spot for the Potawatomi Indians in the early 1800's. Near this camping spot, a small "growing place" developed and was named Shabaquanake by the Indians. Shabaquanake was situated on today's Merton and Delafield town line.

In 1837, what are now the towns of Merton, Delafield, Summit and Oconomowoc were then all known as the Town of Summit with a population too small to support more than one town government. Within a few years, the population had grown enough to allow the Town of Summit to divide into two townships, the Town of Summit to the west and the Town of Warren to the east. Again, as the population grew, the Town of Summit split into the Towns of Summit and Oconomowoc and the Town of Warren divided into the Town of Merton on the north and the Town of Delafield on the south.

The Town of Warren was named after Stephen Warren, Hartland's first settler. Stephen came to this area in 1838 to file claim to the land between what is now bordered by East Capitol Drive to the north, Cottonwood Avenue to the west and Maple Avenue to the east.

In 1848, Stephen Warren sold part of his land to Christian Hershey who in turn used the property to construct a four and one half story grist mill. This area was known as Hersheyville for many years because of this well known landmark. The mill used water power from the Bark River and the mill race and dam that was constructed under East Capitol Drive.

Placing a high value on education, the early settlers believed that no child should have to walk more than three miles to attend school. As a result the area is populated with one room school houses such as Lakeside, Campbell (Bark River), Swallow, Pine Lake (Nashotah), Stone Bank, North Lake, Richmond and Hartland Schools. Many buildings started off as log buildings but were soon replaced by more permanent brick structures as Hartland did in the 1860's. By the early 1920's a need for an accredited high school became apparent. The above school districts banded together to build Hartland Union High School which opened its doors in 1924. Over 30 years later, Hartland Union High School was replaced by Arrowhead High School (South Campus).

In 1848, the Watertown Plank Road (a toll road consisting of wooden planks

running from Watertown to Milwaukee) was completed through Hartland. It was used by farmers as a “highway” for bringing their grains and hops to the Milwaukee breweries. To provide a place for rest and refreshment for its travelers, many hotels or “taverns” were built along the way. The Burr Oak Tavern still stands on the SE corner of Maple Avenue and East Capitol Drive.

The Milwaukee and Watertown Railroad reached Hartland in 1854 and opened up a whole new life for the Village and brought prosperity to the area. Farmers could now ship their produce to the markets in Milwaukee faster and cheaper. Lake resort businesses boomed with spas and hotels on neighboring Pine and Beaver Lakes. People could even take theater excursions to Milwaukee and get home that same evening. No longer was the Watertown Plank Road the only vehicular tie with the rest of the world. Trains played an important part in establishing Hartland as a hub for area farmers with a record breaking 65 trains passing through Hartland in one day in 1909! It was about this time that we believe that our area was renamed Hartland. Legend states that an Englishman working on the laying of the tracks called this area Hartland as it reminded him of a similar “Hartland” in the east.

Another one of Hartland’s early settlers was the Rowell Family who established the Rowell Turkey Farm in the 1880’s. During its most prosperous years from 1884-87, the Rowells bought approximately 875 turkeys a day during the holiday season and employing 10-12 men to take care of some 3,000 fowls. In the years that followed, cholera disease made the turkey farm an unprofitable business. The Rowells then developed their turkey farm into a 30’ wide, one half mile race track with a baseball diamond in the middle. Usually after the races, there would be a ball game between Hartland and a neighboring town. It was reported that as many as 10,000 people came to watch the races and that there wasn’t another spot in town in which to hitch your horse.

Area churches have a long and stable history in our community. The congregation of the First Congregational Church of Hartland was established in 1842 and have resided at the corner of Church Street and East Capitol Drive since that time. The German and Danish immigrants of the area established a Lutheran church and built St. Martins Lutheran Church in 1868. In 1908, the two congregations split and each (Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and Dansk Evangelical Lutheran Kirke, now Our Savior’s Lutheran Church) built their own church on West Capitol Drive. St. Charles Catholic Church built their first facility at the top of Hill Street in 1908 and moved into their current building in 1957. Grace Episcopal Church (now St. Anskars) was located in downtown Hartland from 1868

- 1968.

Our Hartland Library was established in 1897 and soon qualified to become a part of the traveling library system where a shipment of 25-30 books are sent to a community for a period of 6 months. The shipment would then be sent to another community and a new shipment would be received.

Although the Village of Hartland was incorporated in 1892, the Village used the Fire House facilities for their board meetings until the first Village Hall was completed in 1930. It was known as the Community Memorial Building and honored Hartland's soldiers of war. The building was razed in 1980.

The first well for municipal water was finally completed in 1933. Permanent street addresses were also assigned about that time. Prior to that, properties were recognized only by their proximity to neighboring homes or by the current owner.

As Hartland has continued to hold its reputation as a "great place to live" as noted by a billboard along Highway 16 in the 1950's, annexation of area properties became a controversial issue. Most notably, the annexation of land that became the Hartridge Subdivision south of downtown and Bristlecone Pines located northeast of downtown Hartland was the source of many heated discussions.

To this day, Hartland continues to offer the charm of a small town where residents take pride in their community. This is exhibited by the high quality of life found here and still is, as named by the Potawatomi Indians over 150 years ago, "Shabaquanake", a growing place.