

**The Hartland Historical Society**  
**PO Box 297 - 14 Route 12**  
**Hartland, VT 05048**

---

**Society Newsletter**

**Winter 2007**

---

## Nathan Frederick English

Last March we talked about Benjamin Livermore, inventor among other things, of the so called “Permutation Typograph” or “Pocket Printing Machine”. Benjamin was the brother of Emily Livermore English who was married to Nathan Frederick English 1822-1902. Nathan is the star of the show for this newsletter.



The photo above was taken by Nathan English around 1854-55 and shows Benjamin with his sister and the first four of her ten children. The boy holding the baby is

boys, Analdo 1849, Ernest 1869 and Euler.

Nathan English was a remarkable man with a remarkable family. He was an inventor (we have many of his patents, CYM) as were his sons, Euler, Analdo and Ernest. He also had some inventions with his brother-in-law, Benjamin Livermore.

A kindly man who carried raisins in his pockets to give to the children, N.F. spent countless hours in his shop on Lull brook inventing such things as a machine to bind or wrap horse whips and he made a drill that would drill cast iron. The Foundry people wanted to buy it but he wouldn't sell. Told them to come over when they wanted anything bored and he would do it for them (good businessman !!)

The following is from Analdo and Ernest's reminiscence recorded by Howland Atwood in 1938.

"Back in 1847 or 1848 Nathan and his brother-in law got up a line of shoe machinery –press and dinking machines, etc. They went to Milford, Mass. and hired a loft with power and he was the pioneer in introducing shoe machinery. Formerly a shoe factory was merely a warehouse. The materials were accumulated and dealt out to men who cut out shoes - though in those days, boots were mostly made. The people used to come there and they were given so many pegs and various shoe parts, which they took home. They lived on little farms and had a room or two in their homes which was used as a shop where they worked on or made the shoes. The people did not all do the same thing. There would be a team of stitchers who would go and get their materials and take them home and stitch them. The bottomers pegged or sewed on the bottoms-did lasting. The news leaked out that English and Livermore were making shoes by machinery. English used to hire teams of men to work for him and the people, being jealous, would mob the men and disable them so they couldn't work for a few days. Of course, when the men weren't able to work, English and Livermore used to work in their places and Mr. English got very tired. Milford was sort of a malaria city and Mr. English became sick and he and Livermore gave up the business as things didn't go right. Mr. English came home, poorer than when he left, when Analdo was a baby. Mr. English was sick for 2 or 3 years and wasn't able to do much. A partner in their business had absorbed what was left.

A daguerreotype had not been out a great while and along in 1850 Mr. English made them. After awhile he dropped that and began experimenting with machinery. Along in the 1850's he and Lysander Billings became partners and made machinery. Mr. English's first shop was in the barn and then he had a shop around 1854 or 5 with a round top roof which was a rather long and narrow building. This stood at the back of the house

cut in unison with the turning of the last. He carried on the last business for a few years (last- a wooden or metal block on which shoes were shaped) He wouldn't make a fashionable last so that is probably why he lost the business. He made several of these turning machines. Hammond and Merritt had one in their factory on the mill gorge. There was a gristmill with several runs of stone and below that a sawmill with machinery for making other things out of wood in this establishment. There was one of Mr. English's turning machines over in the foundry where they turned out wagon wheel spokes, etc.

Along in 1858 - 59 Mr. English got up a sort of photographic apparatus, so that he took pictures around in the area. He had a room downstairs in the house for working with daguerreotypes and later a room upstairs for sensitizing and developing 'amber types'. By the time the Civil War broke out he had completed a daguerreotype machine and used it for a year or so.

In 1862, Nathan English made up a portable 'amber type' machine. It was a box 10 inches square and 20 inches long. This was the wet process. Mr. English made quite a few of these apparatus's and he used to fit out men with them. He outfitted a man named Hart and H.B. Cross, a boy studying to be a doctor who put himself through college by taking pictures during vacations - at the seashore and elsewhere. Mr. Milliken, editor of the Brattleboro Reporter bought the patent right. Mr. English took hundreds of pictures, many of them portraits.

Ed Bagley ----- sold Nathan English a piece of land near the Lull Brook and he built a dam and put up a shop there. For 6 or 7 years Analdo worked in his father's shop. His father did some but mostly liked to be up in the front room of the house mostly - making models, etc.

In the square shop Nathan built a 40 horsepower engine for John Labaree as Labaree had gotten the idea that he could run a flouring mill along in the 1850s. This mill, in the Ladies Aid Hall in Four Corners was discontinued before 1861.

N.F.'s last years were spent making microscopes, telescopes, etc. He ground thousands of lenses and had rather a craze for making them. He spent months making powerful microscopes. He had one with such a wonderful lens that doctors used to come from all over to use his microscope, as it was so much better than theirs.

His son Euler did a lot of work in the shop after Analdo went away in 1872. Euler got up a machine for sawing marble in the quarry. It had a rectilinear frame which went



Mr. English once invented a flying machine and his son Euler tried it out. Mr. English always said the flying machine was practical if they had an engine to run it. The only engine he could have was steam. Mr. E once told some farmers that it would be only a few years before motorized vehicles came and they would sometime be everywhere.

## WATCH THOSE FIRES!!

Dear Welthy,

I am here and in good helth if there are any Letters come to me at Hartland forward them immediately to Littleton I feel very anxious for you fearing you will or the Girls will build the fires so Large as to Burn up the House this Cold wether don't have fires upstairs if you can help it. "Affectionately yours" D.H. Sumner. This letter (spelling and all) was written by Mr. Sumner (Sumner's Mansion) to his wife in his 87<sup>th</sup> year when he was away on business in Littleton, N.H. They always hired several girls to help as maids for housework, kitchen work, etc. **From Howland Atwood's work pertaining to David Sumner.**

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

As promised, I am continuing the letter that we started last month from Lucia Hazen Webster to her husband, Daniel Cheever Webster after his death in 1943.

"With all you cared for music it was astonishing that the radio didn't seem good to you but I could never interest you in having one of our own and you often hated to go out to Sally's to listen to theirs. It was a long time before I could find out what was wrong with it but finally I discovered you hated to hear all the strange (but to me most fascinating) sounds when one was hunting for the right station.

While the Ford Hour was to be heard on Sunday evenings we used to sit up for it and the two of us enjoyed it after the Comstocks had gone to bed. I could not always be sure whether you were enjoying the concert or enjoying my enjoyment but there was no question when Marion Anderson or Richard Crooks sang or there was band music. Then it surely seemed as good to you as to me.

I wonder how many times we had a neighborhood sing, sometimes at our house, once in awhile at John's but more often at Sanford Shepard's. Whenever Mr. Perkins came to visit at our house or Sanford's (and even sometimes when he was not there at all) the Shepards and Websters gathered for a grand evening. We sang everything from

about Mr. Perkins or his brother going from one place to another to hold “conventions”, gathering together all who were interested in music, having a school for several nights, perhaps two or three weeks, then finishing with a big concert where the pupils showed what they had learned and some distinguished musician from outside had the leading part.

It was before John Randolph was born that Henry Ketchum had his choral -some things I remember to this day. The rehearsals, just like the singing school of older time, lasted some weeks and as a grand finale we gave a concert in the Methodist church with the Claremont band to assist. And before we were married Helen Dudley had a real singing school that we attended where she tried to teach us to “pulsate” and all you got out of it, or I either for that matter, was good wholesome fun.( **John Randolph born 1907. CYM**)

Do you remember how you always loved to hear me sing, “I am sitting on the style, Mary where we stay side by side”? You would stop everything to listen and I heard you telling the children once that it was the most beautiful song ever written. You did love simple happy music - - bits from “Robin Hood”, Henry Lauder’s songs, “The owl and the Pussycat”, and “Lassie O’ Mine”, for instance and music was a force in your life.

Then that afternoon in April when we took your casket to the church for the last service Della Merritt and Rebecca played on the piano and the violin for you while friends were entering and again when they were leaving. Did you hear them play ”Crossing the Bar”? Nothing could have been lovelier and nothing could have pleased you more“.

## **WHAT, NO AIR BAGS??**

While Dr. J.M. Stevens was driving on a recent dark night, the chimney of his lantern fell off and hit the heels of his horse, causing him to kick above the dash-board. A part of the Doctors face has been hid behind plasters as a consequence, and the buggy has been in the hands of the wheelwright. Undated but found with other clippings circa 1900.

## **OUR NEWEST TREASURES**

**We continue to receive wonderful gifts!! Thank you all!!**

Information about Benjamin Bixby Murray, born in Hartland, from **Ruth Warren**

Misc. packet of photos, news clippings, 1966 Real Estate appraisals from

## *President's Note*

The fall festivities are winding down as we slip into the winter solitude of peace and quiet. Although I never look forward to winter, I must admit that I find it invigorating to step outside for a brisk walk in the crisp air and listen to the silence broken by footsteps crunching in the snow.

I want to take this opportunity to give a brief overview of our fall events. We were fortunate this year to be blessed with a perfect fall day for Jay Boeri's walking tour at Sumner Falls last September. All too often planned outdoor events seem to fall on rainy days. A dozen people partook in this popular event and it ended on a very pleasant note with some of them asking if there would be another walk in the near future. The Ski Program that was cancelled twice last winter and spring due to snow and ice storms finally came to fruition last month. Meredith Scott and Dick Collins from the Vermont Ski Museum gave a wonderful presentation on Vermont's Lost Ski Areas. We also learned that Mr. Collins coached the girl's junior varsity basketball team in Springfield, Vermont a number of years past, and that he knew Leon Royce. It certainly is a small world. Carol Mowry represented the Hartland Historical Society at the Breakfast with Santa event at the Hartland Elementary School last week.

Avery Howe will be the guest speaker at our annual meeting on Sunday, May 18, 2008 at the Hartland Public Library at 2 o'clock. Avery filmed the Hartland Boy Scouts during activities many years ago with an 8mm camera. These old homemade movies consist of 500 feet of film that we have had transferred to a VHS tape and on a DVD. Hopefully, this will provide for a smooth running operation.

The 2008 calendars are still available for \$8.00 each plus an additional \$2.00 for postage if mailing is requested.

**Rosemary Morancy**