

38 Damon Hall

Hartland, Vermont



Standing proudly in the center of Hartland village is an example of the last generation of monumental public buildings in Vermont. Damon Hall, a Colonial Revival style town hall was built in 1915 to honor the philanthropic and civic spirit of the Damon family.

Originally from Reading, Massachusetts, the Damon Family settled on a farm in Hartland, south of the Three Corners. The original home was built in 1845 by Luther Damon and his wife, Betsy, and still stands on the property today. They had ten children, the youngest of whom was William E. Damon, educated in local schools and Kimball Union Academy. William married Alam Otis of Windsor, and relocated to New York City, where he eventually administered the credit department of Tiffany's store.

Following retirement to the family farm in Hartland, and William's death in 1911, Mrs. Damon offered funds from her husband's estate for a new town hall, becoming a collaborative gift to the town from several members of the Damon family. The chosen site was already occupied by the Pavilion House hotel that had included a courthouse, ballroom, village post office and store. The Town of Hartland purchased the site and demolished the hotel and barns in order to make way for the new hall.

H.F. Beckwith, of Claremont, New Hampshire, was hired in 1914 as architect and builder, completing the structure on December 2, 1915. The building featured an auditorium with stage and dressing rooms, town offices, and public library. The basement had a kitchen outfitted with a soapstone sink, and a large dining room for serving meals at public events. The rooms at the northwest end of the building were dedicated for permanent use by the Hartland Nature Club and Hartland Historical Society to reflect the family's passion for natural history.

Renovations of the hall didn't occur until 1957 when the library was relocated to a new exterior building, allowing for the space to be utilized by Hartland's town manager. Ten years later a small brick addition was built to house the municipal records vault. Today, Damon Hall continues to be a community center in every sense of the term, hosting family gatherings, town business and meetings, and community functions.

Sources:

<http://www.cric.org/heritage/V10-4.html>