



**Cornelius Bartlett  
(1811–1880)**

Cornelius Adams Bartlett, born on December 22, 1811, was the son of Captain Joseph Bartlett Jr. and Lucy Foster (Bradford) Bartlett. He is best remembered as one of Kingston's most influential historians, having spent the entirety of his life living in and researching the town of Kingston.

Bartlett spent his youth attending local schools, and working odd jobs around town. His father was the master of a local vessel and captain of a packet, which ran between Kingston and Boston. For a number of years Bartlett assisted his father 'coasting' in the winter, working at cutting

timber and in the shipyards. At the age of 23, Bartlett decided to learn the trade of house carpentry from his brother David.

Bartlett worked in the carpentry trade for many years, adapting it to finish work in the ship building yards. In 1859 Bartlett, at the age of 48 married Isabel Drew, who was 41 (daughter of Nathaniel and Dorcas (Delano) Drew of Kingston.) They lived at 240 Main Street, in the old Cobb House, with his aunt and uncle. When the shipbuilding trade declined, Bartlett retired, though he was still relatively young. As he and Isabel had no children, and as they had accumulated sufficient monies, there was little reason for him to pursue work.

It was at this point in his life, that Bartlett began to collect and revise his diaries. He copied from the old books items and comments that he thought should prove interesting and valuable to later generations. The rest he destroyed. This project kept him busy for some time.

When he completed his diaries, Bartlett began to work up his own and other genealogical lines. They required much scanning and copying of town records and other materials, some located in the Registry of Deeds in Plymouth.

Each morning after his breakfast and chores, Bartlett started out for his mail and would visit the Town House or some elderly person who might enjoy talking over old times and might give him valuable information on earlier days. Sometimes he took the morning train to Plymouth and spent the day browsing and copying at the Registry of Deeds. He usually then came home and wrote a short time before dinner. By this time his aunt and uncle had passed, leaving Bartlett and his wife the whole of the house to occupy. He took for his study a small room at the west end of the house, which had been added as an extra bedroom. Each morning and afternoon between dinner and his walk, Bartlett sat and wrote up what he had worked on that day. When he was tired of writing, or when a caller interrupted him, he left his papers just as they were until he could pick it up the next time. Isabel was very sympathetic and did not interfere with his system.

Dr. Thomas Bradford Drew also worked a great deal on Kingston history and the two men had much in common. When Bartlett died in 1880, at the age of 68, his papers were given to Dr. Drew. Dr. Drew also collected and made notes all his life and when he died some of his material was given to the New England Historic and Genealogical Society. His niece, Emily Fuller Drew, kept some and some was given to George C. Burgess of Kingston, who was believed to be writing the long-awaited history of the town. Unfortunately, Burgess did not produce such an history and upon his death, the papers (Bartlett's, Drew's and Burgess's) went to the Frederic C. Adams Public Library.