



## CHRISTIAN SHARPS

### Partnership Exhibit with The New England Civil War Museum



## Sharps Fish Hatchery 1871-1874

### Farming Fish at Valley Falls

In 1871 Christian Sharps purchased the 150-acre farm at Valley Falls for \$9,000. Sharps was chiefly a firearms manufacturer, but also an opportunistic investor. He decided to raise brook trout on the property. Sharps built his ambitious venture alongside Railroad Brook. Its cold waters were the ideal conditions for raising trout. The site is on the **National Register of Historic Places**.

### The Trout Business

Raising trout was a new industry in the late 1800s. It held promise of lucrative profit. The naturally cold, spring-fed streams here in the northeast attracted early trout "farmers." The mature trout were sold to restaurants and used to stock fishing sites.

Christian Sharps' operation was large enough to hatch 300,000 trout a year. It was projected to be the largest fish hatchery in the country, with the capacity to produce up to 500,000 fish a year.

Unfortunately, Sharps died before his trout business ever sold a single fish. His venture closed down after his death.

### Christian Sharps in Vernon

Christian Sharps was famous for the invention of the "Sharps Rifle." The weapon was used in the Civil War and is noted for playing a major role in the victory at Harper's Ferry. He had several arms manufacturing facilities in Connecticut.

Sharps lived on Birch Street in Vernon in a house originally built by the Talcott family, as noted on the historical marker on the house. He died suddenly of tuberculosis in 1874. He was 63 years old.



## Northford Timber Framers



# ANNUAL REPORT JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

# Friends of Valley Falls, Inc.



Preserving history and nature at Valley Falls.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025

JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025





Preserving history and  
nature at Valley Falls.

PO Box 2008  
Vernon, CT 06066  
[www.friendsofvalleyfalls.org](http://www.friendsofvalleyfalls.org)

The Friends of Valley Falls, Inc. is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Organized in 1972, the purpose of the Friends is to take responsible ownership of Valley Falls Farm, and to promote the betterment of Valley Falls Park. We carry out this mission through careful stewardship of their historical and natural resources, and through outreach to the community.

### About the Covers

This year we dedicate the Annual Report to the great partners and collaborators with whom we have worked over the years. Featured on the front cover is our first collaborator, the hard-working and ever-present Vernon Garden Club members who have brightened the scenic hillside with their gardens in the old cold frames since 2001.

Other partners shown on the back cover are Dan Hayden and the New England Civil War Museum, Town Engineer Dave Smith and the Northford Timber Framers, the students at Rockville High School Agricultural Sciences Department, the Town of Vernon Parks & Rec Department and Rockville Public Library. We are ever-grateful for their dedication, creativity and inspiration!

