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As I raked mulch and pulled the weeds at this virtually unknown rundown “park”, I wondered why my employer Don Bishop would spend his time and effort keeping it clean. After all, no one seemed to care anyway. I had never even heard of Bartlett Park before. As the owner of *Gardens Are...* an organic landscaping company, why was he the one to take care of it? Why did he volunteer to keep this “park” clean? When I asked him, his response is simple: “I’m doing my part to preserve the rich history of Marlborough.”

Mayor Charles L. Bartlett (1896-97)

Not much is known about the obscure life of Charles L. Bartlett. Born and raised in Norwich, VT around 1855, he received an abbreviated education before moving to Marlborough. While still a young man he was employed by K.D. Child, a local baker, whom he studied with for around ten years.

Then he opened up his own bakery and established a fine reputation in the bakery industry. He was an honest man, and “his word was really recognized as good as his bond.” (Bigelow, 358) He soon met a young woman, Miss Emily A. Chadwick from the nearby town of Framingham, and in 1875 they were wed. They had two sons together, Fred W. and C. Lester.

In 1890 he was elected to the Common Council of Marlborough, where he accomplished a great deal in aiding the poor of the city. He was often found donating food from his bakery to those in poverty. While serving on the Common Council, he was a member of the building committee for the Pleasant Street Fire Station, which still stands today. It was erected in 1895 for the mere cost of \$17,000.

Then in December 1895 he was elected Mayor. While serving as Mayor, he headed the committee to erect a new high school building. Unfortunately, he never lived to see the completion of the building, as he died on April 8, 1898. The new high school was dedicated on September 10, 1898. It is known today as the Walker Building, and it is one of the finest representations of the rich history of the city of Marlborough.

During his term in office a plot of ground near the Catholic Church on Main Street was made into a park. A lovely fountain was donated by Mrs. A.E. Golbert, and the park was named Bartlett Park in his honor. It can be found at the corner of Prospect Street and Main Street.

Though Bartlett Park is no longer the beautiful park that it used to be, it still serves as a reminder of the man who once served his community so well, a man who loved his fellow men, and dedicated his life to service toward the people of Marlborough. So now I fully understand the reason that my employer, though busy with other jobs, still found the time to do the best he could to preserve a small piece of history.

It is truly amazing how much history is hidden in things that we see everyday. Yet it is not until we stop and take a good look at those places that they share their amazing stories with us. And so, it is my hope that I can stop and take a better look at these places, so that I may more fully understand the rich history of the wonderful city of Marlborough.

Note: All information was taken from the following source.

Bigelow, Ella A. Historical Reminiscences of Marlborough Massachusetts. Marlborough, MA: Times Company, Printers, 1910.