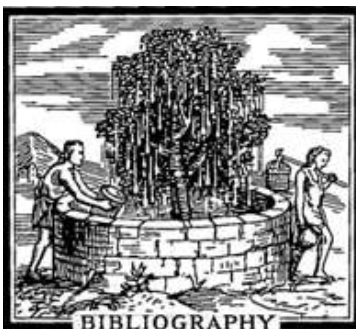


# The story behind the Tree!



## THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

In Paradise the Tree  
Of Knowledge was the pride:  
By God's supreme decree,  
The man who eat, then died.

But Heaven in mercy since  
Does him who tastes forgive;  
To know is no offence:  
Now, he who eats, shall live.

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Henry Stevens, Sr. of Barnet, Vermont – Founder of the Vermont Historical Society.

Henry Stevens, JR. - Book-Dealer that added the bookplate image.

Henry N. Stevens, son of Jr., also Book-Dealer – Stockpiled American & British Libraries.

Thomas H. MacDonnell, who is a Chartered Financial Consultant in Williamsburg, Virginia, adopted the plate in 2006 for his Financial Consulting Firm, James Financial Group. The Poem was written by MacDonnell's Great-Great-Great Grandfather - Henry Stevens, Senior, prominent citizen, librarian and founding father of Barnet Vermont. It was often printed with an early 1800's version of the Vermont Coat of Arms, and was reportedly hung on the walls of the Vermont State House. The Poem and plate, which were first paired by Henry Stevens' Grand son – Henry Newton Stevens, have been used continuously since 1880 by the Henry Stevens Rare Book firm, which has been in the Stevens/MacDonnell family for over 130 years.

The plate depicting the "Tree of Knowledge has a long and intriguing history. Columbus found a unique species of the tree of knowledge in the Canary Islands, a tree which perpetually drew up water from the ground and shed it like a copious rain from its leaves. Humboldt believed this a myth, but in 1797 sought the spot by following the course of Benzoni, who saw the tree in 1544. The tree was blown down in 1850, but some dripping plants still exist in California. Henry Stevens took the vignette for his letterheads and bookplates from an illustration in Benzoni.

Henry Newtown Stevens, who was baptized in the Buchanan White House and educated at the Yale Seminary (1841), went on to become one of America's earliest and most sought-after book-dealers. On both sides of the Atlantic, Henry Newton plied his trade, finding and stocking the greatest Libraries of his times, including those of the John Carter Brown Library (Brown University), the New York Public Library, and the British Museum Library.