
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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Fall 2002

REVIEW OF GROTON, VERMONT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This is the fifth in a planned series of articles on Groton in the twentieth century. The fifth decade - the 'forties' - from 1940 through 1949 is gleaned mainly from The Town Reports, High School yearbooks and Mr. Glover's Groton, published by the Society.

The editor

TWENTIETH CENTURY

Groton

The Fifth Decade

1940 - 1949

World War II was already being fought in Asia and Europe as the decade began. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt won reelection to an unprecedented third term with a campaign to keep America out of the war, but Japan's sneak air attack on December 7, 1941, which destroyed much of our naval fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 'awakened a sleeping giant' and we declared war on the perpetrators, and also on the aggressions of Hitler's Germany in Europe.

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NOTICES

Annual dues are \$5 payable to The Groton Historical Society for January through December.

The Society voted to publish Family Genealogy Records collected by Waldo F. Glover and updated by the members.

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OFFICERS

President	Richard Brooks
Vice President	Norma Hosmer
Secretary	Diane Kreis
Treasurer	Joan Haskell

MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

March through November
10 AM at the

Peter Paul House, 253 Scott Hwy.

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The Vermont Legislature decreed “a state of belligerency with Germany” in September, three months before Pearl Harbor, recognizing that President Roosevelt’s acts including Lend Lease were acts of war and our country would soon be involved.

SCHOOLS

The Groton schools in the 1940’s consisted of the village school and one rural school in Westville. The Westville school had grades 1 through 8 and the village school had grades 1 through 8 plus 4 years of High School. Principals of the High School in the ‘40s were Mr. R. Douglas Dopp, Mr. James F. Berry, Miss Lillian Garvin, Mr. Schuyler Cornthwaite, Mr. Harold Secord, and Mr. Floyd Rising. Mr. Dopp was given a leave of absence to serve in the Armed Services in 1941, and each of the other principals served two years, except Mr. Cornthwaite who served only one.

Miss Lillian Garvin was the mainstay of the High School teachers being on the faculty all decade. Other teachers were Mrs. Dorothy Homeister 4 years, Mr. Lyle Frazer 4 yrs, Mrs. Pearl Marvin Welch 3 yrs, Mr. Kenneth Garvin 2 yrs, Mr. Robert Pratt 2 yrs, Mr. Gilbert Parker 2 yrs, Mr. Edward Eaton 2 yrs, and one year each for Mrs. Doris Steele, Mr. Howard Russell, Miss Eloise Bayley, Mr. John Goodfellow, Mrs. Olive Goodfellow, Miss Pauline Fitch, Mr. Walter

Fletcher, Mrs. Inez Cookson and Miss Mary Hazelton. The difficulty in finding teachers each year was a major problem which became even more difficult during the war years.

The elementary grades were more fortunate as Mrs. Nora Tillotson and Mrs. Thelma Donald taught each year. Other teachers in the elementary grades were Mr. Elmer Page 2 yrs, Mrs. Margaret Carter 2 yrs, Mrs. Vivian Hutchins 2 yrs, Miss Everdine Hood 3 yrs, Mrs. Helen Benzie 2 yrs, Miss Marion Morris 2 yrs, and one year each for Mrs. Millie Brown, Mrs. Peggy Page and Mrs. Beatrice Sunner.

The rural school in Westville was served by Miss Barbara Thompson 3 years, Miss Cora Kennedy 3 yrs, Mrs. Dorothy Main 1 yr., Miss Dorothy Longmoore 1 yr., and Mrs. Helen Benzie taught the final year of the school in 1948-49. This was the last rural school in Groton to close and all students were transported to the village school as the decade ended. Mrs. Benzie began her teaching career at the Westville school in 1925, when she was Miss Helen Peck, and had fond memories of her experience there before she took time off to get married and raise a family.

Janitors at the village school were Mr. C.H. Hendry, Mr. Fred

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Carpenter, and Mr. Harold Eastman, who was also the bus driver the last few years of the decade. At Westville the janitors were Mr. Orlo Goodwin and Mr. Leverett Welch with lots of help from others to do the sweeping.

Mr. J. Stewart Garvin was the School Superintendent, serving the Groton, Ryegate, Newbury, Wells River and Orange schools.

In 1945 the Agriculture and Shop Work Course was discontinued because Mr. Frazer was called to the armed services and no other teacher was available. It was resumed the following year with Mr. Eaton serving half time at Groton and Newbury. Home Economics was discontinued in 1946 for a couple of years before it was resumed.

Student enrollment averaged more than 176 per year during the 40's, with a low of 152 in 1945-46 and a high of 200 in 1948-49. High school students ranged from a low of 39 in 1944-45 to a high of 67 in 1947-48 and 1948-49.

In 1945 the Legislature set the minimum salary for elementary teachers at \$1,000 per annum. The Westville school and community raised \$176 to put running water in the school building in 1945.

A course for returned veterans

interested in Agriculture was taught at the agriculture building by Mr. Reginald White in 1946.

The Agricultural and Shop Course moved from the old blacksmith building on the river behind the Post Office and George Dimick's garage into the basement of the newly erected Community Building in 1948.

Sports returned to the High School in 1944 after a lapse of several years due to the shortage of teachers during the war. Local citizens coached the teams. Mr. Lorimer Puffer coached the boys baseball and basketball teams and Mrs. Nellie White and Mrs. Minnie Tinkham coached the girls basketball team. In 1945 Mr. Puffer again coached the boys baseball team, but the Principal, Mr. Cornthwaite coached the boys basketball team and Miss Fitch, the Home Economics teacher coached the girls basketball team.

Junior and Senior classes produced a play most years to raise funds for class activities.

World War II

War was declared on December 8, 1941 against Japan because of their sneak attack on our Naval fleet at

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Pearl Harbor, Hawaii the day before. Germany and Italy declared war on us three days later on December 11. The war lasted almost four years and ended in Europe with the surrender of Axis troops in Italy on May 2, 1945 and in Germany on May 7. VE day was declared on May 8, 1945. Japan continued to fight with exceedingly large losses of life on both sides. President Truman, who assumed the office after President Roosevelt's death on April 12, issued the order to drop the newly developed atomic bomb on Hiroshima August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9. Japan unconditionally surrendered on August 14, 1945. General MacArthur accepted the formal signing of the surrender on September 2, 1945 and became the Military Governor of occupied Japan.

More than 100 people with Groton connections served in the Military during the armed conflict and many others served during the rest of the decade when the "cold war" was beginning between the only two major powers left, Russia and the US.

In addition to the men and women called up for Military Service, many others left town to work in defense factories producing equipment and supplies to support the war effort. Those remaining in town helped by participating in drives to collect scrap

metal, paper, string and other items needed. The state salvage committee awarded the town a certificate of merit in 1943 for exceeding 110 pounds per capita of salvage collected. No vehicles were made for civilian use during the war, so it was a busy time keeping the old ones running. Even pennies were made without copper in 1943. It was a time to save, recycle and get by with what we had. Many items, such as gasoline, sugar, meat and other food items were rationed to prevent hoarding and insure an equitable distribution. Volunteers stood watch around the clock, first in West Groton and later at Mt. Medad, to spot airplanes flying in the area and report them to the Air Force.

The Boy Scout Troop was terminated when Scout Master Clarence Welch went in the service. McLure's Student Band was discontinued when C. George McLure went in the service. Both organizations were started up again after the war. The Band played concerts in Groton, Wells River, Fairlee, Bradford, Haverhill, Monroe and North Monroe on a weekly basis during the summer, plus concerts at several Fairs and 'old home day' celebrations, the Woodsville Fourth of July, and a number of Veterans celebrations in New Hampshire and Vermont.

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Businesses

During the war the Groton Fairs were not held and the dances at the Rock Maple Ballroom were also stopped. The building and grounds were sold to John W. French who converted it into a bobbin mill. The mill burned in September 1947 and was rebuilt the same year. It employed 15 mill workers and provided a market for local loggers.

Haldane of Groton, Inc. erected a factory building west of the village in 1947 for its short-lived woodworking operations. The Luce Manufacturing Company took over the building by the end of the decade and made a number of "Blue Magic" products, including several salt & pepper sets and storage canisters. The 'blue magic' is a desiccant that absorbs moisture keeping contents of the containers dry and crisp. The company employed 26 people in 1949.

Other businesses in town included: Henry A. Goodine, Barber & Insurance; Carroll E. Ricker, Fire Insurance; Morse Poultry Farm; Goodfellow's Chicken Farm; Charles C. Lord, Printing; Welch's Egg Service; Wilbur R. Carbee, Granite & Marble; Hosmer Brothers, Granite & Marble; Lacroix Memorials; J. W. Main, Artistic Granite Memorials; Farm

Machine Exchange; For-All Grain Co.; Groton Grain Co.; B. L. Brown, Meats & Groceries; John K. White Estate, Groceries & Hardware; Ricker Appliance Store; Vern Frost, Gas and Electrical Appliances; Smith's IGA Store; McLam's IGA Store; Hanson Variety Store; Smith's Snack Bar; L. S. Puffer, Baby Chicks; Legare's Garage, later changed to Dimick's Garage; Square Front Garage, W. L. Cassidy; Shell Service Station, George Carpenter; Harry Welch, General Trucking; Calvin V. Darling, General Trucking; Elmer C. Frost, General Contractor; Les Page, Roofing; Moulton Logging Co.; Willie Darling, Lumber Broker; Wesley Schwarz, Plumbing & Heating; Austin Welch, Plumbing; Kenneth Grey, Taxi Service; Vermont Dairy Co.; and Whiting Creamery.

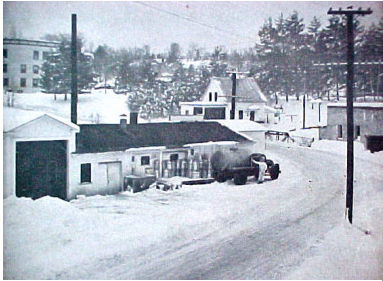
Some returning veterans went into business for themselves, others found work with local employers, but many left the area looking for greater opportunities elsewhere.

Groton Grange purchased the Methodist Church building in West Groton and converted it into a Grange Hall for their meetings.

Reverend N. Harlan Scott was the Methodist minister all decade except for 1943 - 46 when he

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SOME GROTON SCENES IN THE FORTIES 1940 - 1949



Groton Creamry



Morse Poultry Farm



Ricker's Sawmill at Ricker Pond



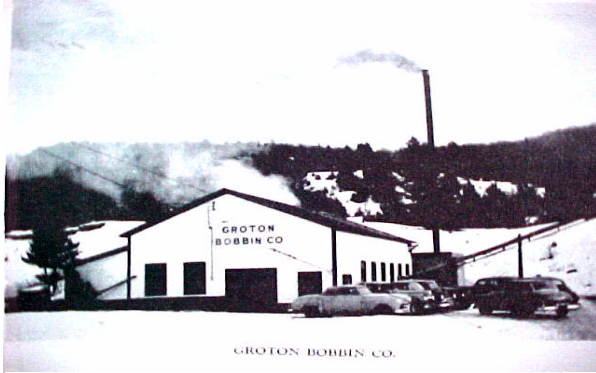
Groton Village looking north



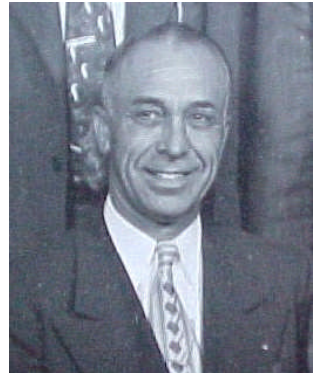
1943-44 Girls Basketball Team: Principal J. F. Berry, Marie Farrow, Eldora Chamberlin, Buddenae Smith, Dolly Page, Coach Miss Marvin, Inez Farrow, Betty Brown, Judy Foster, Mildred Frost, and Helen Brock.



**Town Representative 1943
Mrs. Addie Ricker**



Groton Bobbin Company rebuilt by John French after 1947 fire



**Town Representative
1947
Mr. John French**



1949 Junior and Senior High School Classes: Principal Mr. Floyd Rising

Top L-R: Ralph Hatch, Albert Achilles, Kent Haskell, Robert McDonald, Philip Sherlaw, William Achilles, _____,

Middle: Orrin Beck, Eva Davis, Clara Hatch, Ruby Edwards, June Evans, Mildred Whitehill, Evelyn Page, Phyllis Page, Dale Darling, Phillip Hanchett, Carroll Palmer, Dale Wright.

Bottom: Leslie Edwards, Josephine Avery, Jean Smith, Helen Vance, Joan Swarz, Charlotte Benzie, June Dickey, Christie Murray, _____, _____

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served as Army Chaplain. During these years the Methodist and Baptist Churches combined their services under Rev. Robert Julian Bracy.

Baptist ministers in the 1940's were Rev. James Ladd, who also served in the military, and Rev. Robert Bracy.

TOWN OFFICERS

George H. Ricker was Moderator for 8 years and James W. Main for the other two. George H. Millis was both Town Clerk and Treasurer for the first 6 years. The last 4 years his wife, Lizzie Millis, was Town Clerk and Addie E. Ricker was Treasurer. Selectmen in the decade were Gerald Morse, 9 years; Herman P. Ricker, 8; John W. French, 6; W. W. Pillsbury, 3; C. J. Bailey, 2; and Nelson W. Whitehill and Orlo Goodwin, one year each. Road Commissioners in the 40's were Bert Bailey 4 years and Marshall Darling and Wendell Crown, 3 years each.

School Directors were Earl Welch

and Addie E. Ricker 7 years, Alice Goodine 6, Emma Graham and John Goodfellow 3, Mary Beck 2, and one each for Ida Taylor, J. Clarence Welch, and Everett Willey. Overseers of the poor were Raymond Page 4 years, Ernest Taisey 2, and P. Stanley Taisey and Virginia Frost one each. Constables and Tax Collectors were George H. Ricker, 7 years; Earl B. Eastman two and James Rouhan one. Grand Jurors were G. Robert Pillsbury and Ralph B. Foster. Town Agents were George H. Millis, Gerald Morse, and John W. French. Listers were Earl S. Welch 10 years, Ralph Evans 4, R. N. Brown and Malcolm Graham 3, H. P. Ricker, Wendell Crown, and George S. Welch two, and one each for Carlos Dunn, W. F. Darling, J. B. Renfrew, and Herman Clark. Auditors were Burton L. Brown, Ralph N. Carpenter, Earl Rock, Walter Fletcher, Harold L. Eastman, Philip T. White, and George H. Ricker. Library Trustees were Helene White, Nellie Jeffery, Ida M. Ricker, Fannie M. B. Ricker,

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Haldane of Groton, Inc. built this factory west of the village in 1947 and it was the home of Luce Mfg. Company in 1949.

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Minnie Brown, Suzanne (Mrs. L. W.) Hanson, and Dorothy Main.

VT Sesquicentennial

Groton recognized 150 years of Vermont statehood at Town Meeting on March 4, 1941 and celebrated May 30 at the Methodist Church. Waldo Glover presented the "Beginnings of Groton" and McLure's Student Band played a concert.

The following year article 16 in the town warning was "To see if the Town will vote to instruct the Selectmen to appoint a committee of three to take up the matter of publishing a town history. Said committee to see if they can secure Mr. W. F. Glover as historian; ascertain as near as possible the number of copies to be published and the approximate cost of publication." In 1943 article 18 of the warning read "To see if the Town will elect a Historical Committee of five members on the publication of a Town History." And article 19 was "To see if the Town will vote a sum of money towards the publication of a Town History, and if so how much?" This same question was asked the following two years and in the 1946 Town Report Nellie T. Jeffrey, Secretary and Treasurer of the Library and Community Building

Fund reported, "The committee further reports that considerable progress has been made in the collection and classification of material by Mr. Waldo Glover, who has consented to write the history."

By the end of the decade, Nellie Jeffrey, Secretary and Myrtie Hosmer, Treasurer of the Groton Town History Commission reported a balance of \$1,079.58 in the fund and steady progress on the Groton History.

FAMILY HISTORY

The Society voted to publish the family records collected by Mr. Waldo F. Glover in the late 1940's and early 1950's when he was working on the Groton History. Members have been working to update many families and add others that didn't respond to earlier requests or came to town after the records were collected.

Much help and cooperation will be needed to have this project completed in a reasonable time. If you would like to help review a specific family, please let the Society know and a printout of the information on hand will be provided to you.

GROTON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES**1940**

Cleason Darling, Howard Eastman, Robert Ricker, Francis Ricker, Barbara Brown, Myrtle Davis, Thelma Edwards, Iona Gray, Shirley Haskell, Velma Hood, Marjorie McQueen, Margaret Page, Minnie Welch.

1941

Lyman Crown, Richard Daniels, Dalton Darling, Dale Fifield, Harold Hart, Darwin Hendry, Irving Moulton, Douglas Page, Raymond Taylor, Dario Zampieri, Arlene Barnes, Lillian Darling, Alice Hooper, Ruth Taylor, Frances Thurston.

1942

Vern Haskell, Rudolph Hendry, Darius James, Gerald Smith, Clayton Welch, Princetta Bailey, Chestine Brown, Bertha Evans, Bernice Needham, Pauline Page, Phyllis Paige, Lucille Williams, Helene Welch, Pearl Young.

1943

Frederick Dana, Calvin Frost, Sewell Page, Gordon Puffer, Porter Thurston, Julia Foster.

1944

Robert Brown, Floyd McDonald, Francis McQueen, Inez Farrow, Marie Farrow, Alta Welch.

1945

Lyle Edwards, Wallace Hood, James Moulton, Ivis Barnes, Harlene Evans, Evelyn Frost.

1946

Willard Benzie, Helen Brock, Betty Brown, Eldora Chamberlin, Madeline Darling, William Emery, Muriel McDonald, Geraldine Page, Pearl Sayers.

1947

Theresa Cassady, Harold Darling, Joseph Davis, Hugh Farrow, Douglas French, Allen Gandin, Beverly Hartson, Richard Page, Stuart Page, William Palmer, Eugene Puffer, Katherine Ricker, Ida Sayers.

1948

Maria Bailey, Melvin Benzie, Patricia Brown, Mildred Davis, Winston Doe, Vernold Eastman, Barbara Ingram, Deane Page, Lorraine Peck.

1949

Albert Achilles, William Achilles, Josephine Avery, Orin Beck, June Dickey, Ruby Edwards, June Evans, Marlene Farrow, Vilma Gandin, Phillip Hanchett, Kent Haskell, Carroll Palmer, Joan Schwartz, Philip Sherlaw, Helen Vance, Dale Wright.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS

Adams, Crawford
 Bain, Rupert
Barnes, Clifford
 Bixby, Edward
 Blodgett, Howard
 Boomhower, Ellis
 Brink, Trafford
 Brock, Kenneth
 Brock, Robert
 Brown, Dale
Carpenter, Dwight
 Carpenter, George
 Carpenter, Jackson
 Carpenter, Kendall
 Carpenter, Paul
 Carpenter, Theodore
 Carter, W. H.
 Cassidy, Durwood
 Clark, Franklin
 Daniels, Andrew
 Daniels, Richard
 Daniels, Roland
 Dana, Fred
 Darling, Calvin
 Darling, Cleason
 Darling, Clifford
 Darling, Gerald
 Darling, Guy
 Darling, Newton
 Davis, Ercil
 Dennis, Eugene
 Dennis, Robert
 Donald, George
 Dopp, R. Douglas
 Eastman, Bernice L.
 Eastman, Carroll
 Eastman, Cyrus
 Eastman, Earle R.
 Eastman, Harold L.
 Eastman, Howard R.
 Eastman, Kenneth

Eastman, Lloyd
 Eastman, Seth
 Eggleston, W. R.
 Emerson, Franklin
 Emery, Harry
 Emery, Richard
 Evans, Carl
 Evans, Richard
 Fifield, Clifton
 Fifield, Dale
 Fifield, Lee
 Fitzgerald, Patrenle
 Fraser, Lyle
 Freer, Newell
 Frost, Paul
 Furman, Milo
 Goodfellow, John
 Goodwin, Warren
 Hanchett, Richard
 Hart, Stanley
 Haskell, Guy
 Haskell, Vern
 Hatch, Fred
 Hatch, Paul
 Hay, Everett
 Hendry, Darwin
 Hood, Thelma
 Ingram, Franklin
 Ladd, Rev. James
 Legare, Wendell
 Main, Mary I.
 McLure, C. George
 McNally, Donald
 McNally, Howard
 McQueen, Francis
 Morrison, Austin
 Moulton, Daniel
 Moulton, Henry
 Needham, Edward
 Pillsbury, Roderick
 Pillsbury, Russell

Page, Gordon
 Page, Howard
 Page, John
 Page, Russell
 Puffer, Gordon
 Ricker, Edmund
 Ricker, Pearl
 Scott, Donald
 Scott, Rev. Harlan
 Smith, Andrew
 Smith, Dwight
Smith, Gerald, Jr.
 Smith, Grover
 Steele, Burton
 Steele, Roland
 Taisey, Stanley
 Taylor, Raymond
 Vance, Calvin
 Welch, Clarence
 Welch, Clayton
 Welch, Francis
 Welch, Richard
 White, Philip T.
 Willey, Charles
 Willey, Forrest
 Williams, Clarence
 Williams, Loren
 Zamperi, Dario

Bold = killed in service

Names include those in
 1978 Groton History, 1943
 Town Report, and 1942
 and 1946 Groton High
 School yearbooks.



Home of the Groton Historical Society Groton, Vermont
Peter Paul House built in 1840

Groton Historical Society Newsletter
J. W. Benzie, Editor
P. O. Box 209
Groton, VT 05046-0209

