
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

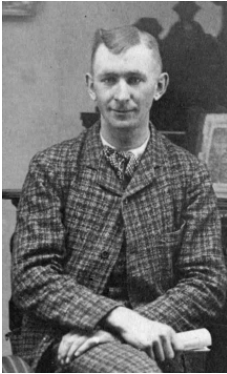
Newsletter

Volume 20 Issue 4

Groton, Vermont 05046

Fall 2007

GROTON PIONEERS



Rhoney Dunn b. 1866, Great-Great Grandson of Archibald McLachlin, moved to St. Johnsbury with his parents before 1880.

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GROTON SETTLERS

Before the 1800 census

‘Pioneer settler’ seems like an oxymoron. Pioneers are those leading the way for others to follow and that is what many early pioneers did. When their followers became established, their pioneering spirit urged some to move on. The Vermont Historical Society estimated that 42% of Vermonters had left the rocky hillsides and moved westward by 1860, and that would include a good number of Groton citizens. Those enumerated in the U. S. Census each decade beginning in 1790 are recorded for posterity, but those who came and left between censuses may not be known unless they are identified in Church records, Court records, Town Reports, Newspaper articles,

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MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

April through October
10 AM at the Peter Paul House,
1203 Scott Hwy.

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School records, family records, etc. [Or information about them is submitted to the Groton Historical Society to be included with their family history records].

Early visitors to the area before the town was granted in 1780 would include Lydia (Bradley) Burnham's great grandmother, Mary (Williams) Bradley (1641-1714) who was among the captives of the Indians at Coos in the summer of 1704 and is believed to have been in the area that later became Groton during part of her captivity (Mr. Glover's Groton p. 17). One hundred and twenty one years later, in 1825, Lydia came to Groton with her son, Moses Burnham, and lived to be 104 years 9 months of age, a record that has not been surpassed in 150 years. Moses deeded land to the Trustees of the Methodist Church on January 18, 1836 "in consideration of one cent thereof" and the church was built that same year.

Thomas Butterfield and 74 associates signed the petition for the town of Groton which was granted to them on November 7, 1780. But only 13 of them were on the town Charter when it was signed by Governor Chittenden on October 29, 1789. The 13 land speculators who were on both the grant and charter were: Thomas Butterfield, Jonathan Child, Thomas Chittenden, John Fassett Jr., Benjamin Fay, Robert Johnson, Nehemiah Lovewell, Nehemiah Lovewell Jr., John Page Jr., Joshua Stanton,

Eliakim Stoddard, John Strong, and John Taplin (Mr. Glover's Groton p. 24). There was an extensive transfer of land titles during the nine years between the issuance of the Grant and signing of the Charter. The new names on the Charter that were not on the Grant included Ethan Allen, Moses Robinson, James Whitelaw, and James Abbott, who purchased the right of proprietor, James Warton, in 1782 and he became the only proprietor to "settle" in Groton. But in 1807 James Abbott moved his family to Ohio. Although the other proprietors owned land in Groton and may have spent time here, they are more correctly classified as land speculators than settlers.

At the May 6, 1788 meeting of the proprietors a tax was voted to defray expenses of surveying the lots in Division one. Failure to pay their assessments promptly, resulted in 73 delinquents being notified their lots would be sold at public vendue to satisfy their tax. Twenty six proprietors apparently paid up as only 47 lots were actually sold and 33 of them were purchased by James Whitelaw of Ryegate, making him the largest land holder in Groton at that time (Mr. Glover's Groton p. 26).

The Proprietors periodically held meetings and the

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first one of record was on August 13, 1787 at the home of Thaddeus Munson in Manchester. Ira Allen was elected moderator, Jonathan Hoit clerk, and John Knickerbocker treasurer and collector. Ira Allen was chosen to survey 100-acre lots in Division one for each proprietor which was completed and the first 86 lots were drawn at a meeting on May 6, 1788 held at Thomas Johnson's in Newbury. In addition to the lots for individual proprietors, land was reserved for roads, schools and ministers. The meeting was officially called by Jacob Kent Justice of the Peace in Newbury and Jacob Bayley was elected moderator, James Whitelaw clerk and treasurer, and Col. Robert Johnson collector. William Wallace was selected as an indifferent person to draw lots. The five families already living in Groton were exempt from the draught. The first lot to be drawn was No. 21 awarded to Thomas Butterfield and was apparently acquired later by Timothy Townshend, son-in-law of John Darling, who settled there in 1789. At a meeting on March 6, 1789 held at David Dunbar's in Ryegate with John Wallace moderator, a committee of James Whitelaw, Archibald McLachlin and Willoughby Goodwin was elected to lay out 200-acre lots for each proprietor in a Second Division. For one reason or another, the survey was delayed and lots 87 to 191 were

not recorded until the meeting on December 10, 1802. At this meeting new officers were elected - Jesse Heath moderator, Edmund Morse clerk, James Whitelaw treasurer and Robert Whitelaw collector. The lots were drawn at the next meeting on April 14, 1803 at Gray's tavern. The 3rd and final Division was laid out in 1820 and with the sale of these lots the proprietors meetings ended and their records were turned over on September 4, 1821 to the Groton Town Clerk, Peter McLachlin, son of Archibald and Christian (McKinley) McLachlin.

In the meantime Groton had been organized at its first Town Meeting on March 21, 1797 held at the home of John Darling. Town Officers elected were: moderator Samuel Bacon; town clerk Nathaniel Knight; selectmen Samuel Bacon, Nathaniel Knight and James Abbott; treasurer Jonathan James; constable and collector William Frost; grand juror Dominicus Gray; tithing man Israel Bailey; surveyors of highways Aaron Hosmer, Jr. and Silas Lund; surveyor of lumber Robards Darling; sealer of weights and measures William Frost; hog reifs Jeremiah Bachelier (Batchelder) and Samuel Darling; and fence viewer James Hupper (Hooper). The meeting was convened by

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The Plymouth Colony : [A Spanish Perspective]

[By Daniel L. Munoz in the San Diego newspaper La Prensa, 29 Nov. 1996]

Thanksgiving, aside from being a day of feasting, is also a day in which Americans join in the communal celebrating of the arrival of the Anglo-Puritans to the American continent.

The common mythology paints the arrival of the first Anglophiles as upstanding Puritans seeking freedom to practice their religion. Many claim the Pilgrims as being their direct ancestors to this country and derive a sense of pride from it. Mythology would establish the Pilgrims as being the first to arrive and colonize a hostile North America. In the process the myths fail to note the historical fact that they were preceded by the Spaniards and Mestizos who had settled colonies and Pueblos nearly 200 years before the Puritans ever set foot on Plymouth Rock. The Pilgrims were also preceded by the Settlers of Jamestown in the late 1500's.

The Mayflower was not breaking new ground when it set sail from England to the American continent. In fact it was following the well established sea routes plotted on existing sea charts. Beginning in 1492, Cristobal Colon first set sail from Espana to find a route to India and instead encountered the Caribbean islands. Ponce de Leon soon followed in his Galleons and made landfall in what is today Florida. Together they first charted the unknown South Atlantic from Spain to the American Continent. They were soon followed by the Latino Mariners Gordillo and Quexos who sailed up the Eastern Seaboard of the United States in 1521 and charted the At-

lantic up to present day Georgia. The Spaniard Esteban Gomez sailed from Florida up the North Carolina coast to Virginia plotting the route that would later be followed by the Mayflower.

The Pilgrims were to set sail 5,000 kilometers across the Atlantic before they would reach the shores of Virginia where the King had chartered the Pilgrims to settle. They had to take with them needed utensils, clothing, seed, tools, building materials, livestock, arms and ammunition. The new continent was endowed by nature, with large rivers, such as the Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna.

The Mayflower was chartered by the Plymouth Company which had over 70 investors banded together as the "Merchant Adventures" headed originally by Thomas Weston. Their intent was to exploit the American continent for profit. Many soon realized that their investment was not immediately paying off and sold out. Isaac Allerton successfully negotiated an agreement with the remaining investors to buy off the stock. Forty-two investors remained. The remainder of the costs of sailing to America would be borne by the Pilgrims and the prisoners whose passage was financed by King James I.

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General William Chamberlin Justice of the Peace from Peacham in accordance with the requirements of the State of Vermont for holding town meetings in unorganized townships.

Mr. Glover describes the first town meeting with the following 20 heads of families attending: *James Abbott*, Samuel Bacon, *Israel Bailey*, Jeremiah Batchelder, *John Darling*, *Robards Darling*, Samuel Darling, Charles Emery, John Emery, Timothy Emery, William Frost, Dominicus Gray, James Hooper, *Aaron Hosmer*, *Jonathan James*, Nathaniel Knight, Bradbury Morrison, *Edmund Morse*, Edmund Welch and Jonathan Welch. Silas Lund, elected surveyor of highways, must have been in attendance also.

Seven of the eight families listed in the 1790 census (those in italics) were in attendance, only Timothy Townshend was missing. Perhaps he died before the 1797 Town Meeting as he is not listed in the 1800 census and his widow, Sally (Darling) Townshend, married Josiah Jennison about 1804 in Peacham.

Samuel Bacon was born at Middletown, CT in 1758 and came to town after the 1790 census. He married Rhoda Miner about 1787 and they had one daughter, Clarissa, who married Simeon Walker in 1816 at Peacham. Samuel was elected Moderator and Selectman at the first Town Meeting in 1797. Before the 1800 census he moved his family to

Peacham where he died in 1805. All the others attending the first Town Meeting were enumerated in the 1800 census of Groton.

Information about the 8 pioneer families, living in town when the first census was completed in 1791, was in recent newsletters: James Abbott, Israel Bailey, John Darling (including the families of his son, Robards, and son-in-law Timothy Townshend), Aaron Hosmer, Jonathan James, and Edmund Morse.

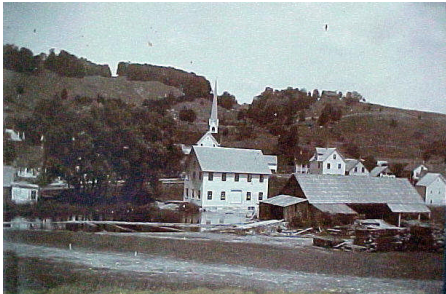
J e s s e H e a t h , a Revolutionary War veteran, was the first pioneer family in the series, coming to Groton with his wife, Phebe Straw, in 1781, but he was not listed in the Groton censuses until 1800. He and his family were enumerated in the Ryegate census of 1790.

Other pioneer settlers living in Groton in 1788, were Archibald McLachlin and Jacob Jenness, but they also had left before the 1790 census was taken. Peter Wesson, brother-in-law of Edmund Morse and son of Ephriam and Lydia (Proctor) Wesson was reportedly living in Groton at an early date, but died shortly after settling on lot number 5, and is not listed in the proprietors minutes of 1788 nor in the 1790 Groton census.

Other Town Officials before 1800 not listed in the census

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GROTON PICTURES FROM THE PAST



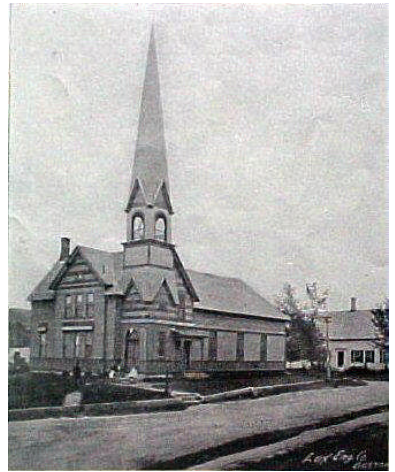
1900



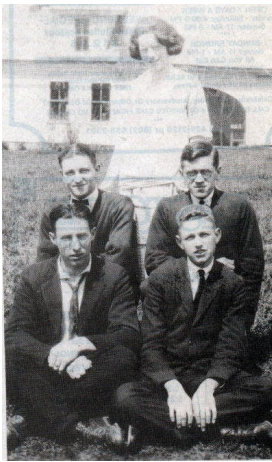
1905



1920



1910



1924



1932



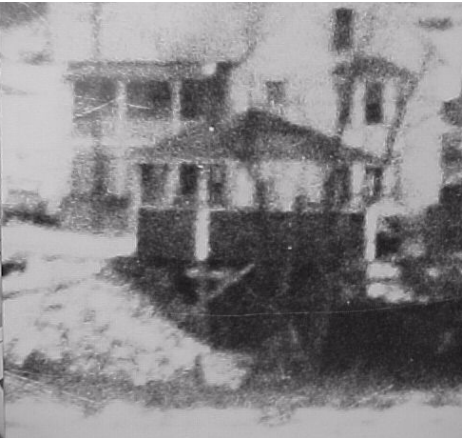
1939



1940



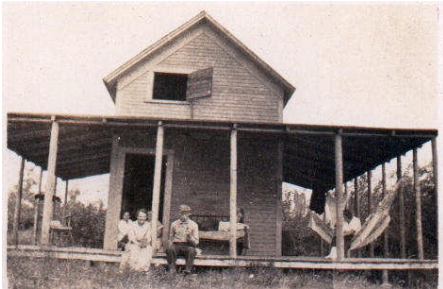
1930



1937



1935



1943

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are: Samuel Fellows, Joshua Merrill, Moses Noyes and Benjamin Smith. Samuel Fellows was elected Moderator at the May 5, 1797 Town Meeting, Moses Noyes was Moderator of the Oct 9, 1797 Town Meeting when Benjamin Smith was elected lister, and Joshua Merrill served as a Town Official in 1798 or 1799. Other Town Officials before 1800 are listed in the 1800 Groton census and they included Ephraim Gary, Timothy Emery, Jonathan Macomber, Enoch Manchester, and Edward Pollard.

Jacob Jenness born in 1766 at Rochester, Stafford Co., NH and died in 1807 may be the Jacob Jenness who was in Groton in 1788. *Mr. Glover's Groton* refers to him as Jacob Jenness on p. 25 and Jonathan Jenness on p. 33. Perhaps he is the Jonathan Jenness who lived in Topsham later and was referred to as 'Job' Jenness in the discussion of mail service to Groton on p. 237? A Jacob Jenness born about 1794, living in Craftsbury, Orleans Co., VT and married Mary Way about 1813 could possibly be a son of the Jacob Jenness who was in Groton in 1788. In the 1880 census of Craftsbury, VT a Jacob Jenness age 72 was living with his wife Eliza age 62 born in VT, and possibly he is a son or relative of the Jacob who mysteriously disappeared from Groton before the 1790 census was taken. Mr. Glover stated that the

whereabouts of Jacob Jenness are unknown.

Archibald McLachlin (also spelled McLaughlin) was born in Sterling, Scotland in 1743 and came to America in the spring of 1775 with his wife Christian (McKinley) McLachlin and their two boys, John and Peter. They came with Alexander Harvey's company of farmers to settle in Barnet; however, in the early spring of 1776 they were living in Peacham when the threat of an invasion from Canada caused the few people living there to flee. They returned in the fall along with Deacon Elkins and John Skeeel and were the first settlers to over-winter in Peacham.

In 1788 the McLachlin family was living in Groton on lot 26. At the proprietors meeting on May 6, 1788 Archibald was chosen to be an assessor along with James Abbott and Edmund Morse. And at the meeting on March 6, 1789 he was elected to lay out the second division in Groton along with surveyor James Whitelaw and Willoughby Goodwin. Before the first U. S. Census was completed in 1791, however, Archibald McLachlin moved his family back to Peacham, but many of their 176 descendants listed in the GHS family records lived in Groton.

Archibald and Christian had 5 boys and one girl. The oldest

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GHS UPDATE

Interest in family histories is gaining momentum, Christie Murray Hersey sent info on Murray, Page and Heath families. Stephen Perry requested info about the Welch and Morrison families. Timothy Heath asked for a copy of the Newsletter with his ancestor, Jesse Heath. Elizabeth Westerwelle asked for info on Dana and Daniel families. Thanks to all the readers who wrote about family history and sent information and pictures for the GHS family records.

The summer newsletter had pages 3 & 10 missing in some copies. If your copy had pages 5 & 8 printed where pages 3 & 10 should be, let me know and I'll send you a corrected copy.

Membership dues are \$10 per person or \$15 per couple. Ten members are paid up for 2008, 47 for 2007, and 15 for 2006. Another three last paid in 2005 and will be dropped from the mailing list next year if dues are not paid. The last year of dues payment is shown on your mailing label. Please notify us of any errors.

Come sit in a comfortable padded chair at the next meeting.

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two, John and Peter, were born in Scotland; John in 1771 and Peter in 1774. John married Mary, daughter of James and Mary (Mitchell) Whitehill, in 1801 and they had 11 children. Peter married Isabelle Nelson, daughter of William and Jean (Stewart) Nielsen in 1808, and they had 7 children. Peter served Groton as Town Clerk, Selectman, Justice of the Peace, School superintending committee, and as the Town Representative in 1813-17. The other children were born in Vermont, Archibald in 1776, James in 1779, Mary in 1781 and Lachlen in 1784. Archibald went west in 1837 and according to A. H. Hill's account of Groton reported in

the Ryegate History, he invented a loom on which his wife wove a coat in one piece without a seam, including sleeves, collar, lapel and all. James married Mary, daughter of John and Elizabeth (Finley) Stainbrook in 1818, and they had 9 children. Mary married William, son of John and Mary (Dirien) Bachop and they had 7 children. Lachlen was unmarried and went to Texas according to one report, but he is listed in the 1810 census of Groton as head of a household with 3 males 16 to 26 and one female 16 to 26 years of age.

Groton families listed in the 1800 census are planned for future issues of the newsletter.

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The Mayflower had Christopher Jones, as its captain who owned 25 percent of the Mayflower. Capt. Jones was born in Essex, England and became the master of the Mayflower in 1609 and sailed transporting goods. In 1620, he transported the Pilgrims to New England. Capt. Christopher Jones returned from the New World to England. He died on the 5th of March 1621 to sickness brought about by the first winter with the Pilgrims in New England.

His crew consisted of the following:

John Clarke, Masters Mate. He had previously made several trips to Jamestown, Virginia beginning in 1575. In 1611 he was captured by the Spanish and imprisoned for a year in Havana. He was then taken to Spain where he was held for five years. He was given his freedom in 1617. He died three years later after leaving New England.

Robert Coppin, Pilot. He was hired for his knowledge of the East Coast coastline.

Andrew Williamson, function not listed.

John Parker, function unknown.

“Master” Leaver, function unknown.

Mr. Ely, seaman. He was also hired to work in the colony for a year.

William Trevore, seaman, hired to stay for a year in the colony.

Giles Heale, the Mayflowers surgeon. He returned to England with the ship.

John Alden, hired as cooper (barrel-maker). He decided to stay in Plymouth rather than return to England.

Myles Standish, hired as military commander.

Thomas English, hired as a seaman.

John Allerton, seaman.

Richard Gardiner, seaman.

Unfortunately, the Mayflower was blown northward away from the Vir-

ginia coast. Once the ship failed to make landfall in Virginia, the prisoners rebelled and declared themselves “freemen.” They declared they were no longer under the rule of the Puritans as King James had placed them under ‘The reasoning of the majority of the passengers and crew.’ The King’s contract was for Virginia and not anywhere else.

Eventually, the Mayflower made landfall in Cape Cod Harbor (now Provincetown Harbor), Mass. According to records, the Puritans realized they couldn’t survive on the unfriendly shores of Mass. without cooperation of the former prisoners. Thus on November 11, 1620 on board the Mayflower, the Puritans and the passengers joined in forming a Compact. Nathaniel Morton, who printed the Compact in 1660 in his “New England’s Memorial” was the first to write down the names of the signers of the compact. The original Mayflower Compact has never been found and is assumed destroyed.

According to the historian Samuel Elliot Morrison, the first voyage of the Mayflower carried 102 passengers. Of these, only 42 of them were ‘dissident Puritans’ who were fleeing religious persecution in Leyden, Holland. They were identified as the “Leyden Contingent.” The “London Contingent” consisted of 24 prisoners rounded up from various prisons in England by King James I and destitute families or individuals from

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London. These prisoners were not to be considered “freeman” when they established their colony in Virginia. King James, who gave the Puritans their charter to found a colony in Virginia, made it contingent upon their accepting the London Contingent.

The prisoners were considered by the Puritans as “sinners and corruptables.” The Puritans noted in their book “Puritan Family” that they were very concerned about these “sinners” and their influence on the children. But, they realized that without the prisoner’s help they would be unable to create a colony in the new world.

The “London Contingent” included: **John Billington, Richard Britteridge, Peter Browne, William Butten, Robert Carter, Edward Doty, Francis Eaton, John Hooke, Steven Hopkins, John Howland, John Langmore, William Latham, Edward Leister, Christopher Martin, Richard More** and his three siblings **Ellen, Mary and Jasper, William Mullins, Solomon Prower, John Rigdale, Henry Samson, George Soule, Elias Story, John Tilley, Edward Tilley** and **Richard Warren**.

The “Leyden Contingent”, as best can be reconstructed, included the following Puritans: **Isaac Allerton, William Bradford, William Brewster, John Carver, James Chilton, Francis Cooke, Humility Cooper, John Crackstone, Moses Fletcher, Edward Fuller, Samuel Fuller, John Goodman, William Holbeck, [John Hooke], Desire Minter, Degory Priest, Thomas Rogers, [Edward Tilley], Thomas Tinker, John Turner, Thomas Williams, Edward Winslow and Gilbert Winslow**.

Unknown as to which contingent they belonged were: **John Allerton, Richard Clarke, Edmund Margesson, Edward**

Thompson, William White and Roger Wilder.

Unfortunately once the colony was begun the logs note that one John Billington, was hung for murder. Edward Doty and Edward Leister got into a duel and were caught and punished. Stephen Hopkins was punished for selling arms to the Indians and providing them with liquor.

Somewhere during this time the original Puritans and the new freemen held their first “Thanksgiving” for having survived their first brutal winter in the Plymouth Colony. With the aid of the indigenous people who provided them with food and aid, the Puritans and their “freemen” survived and had lived to praise the Lord for their deliverance.

(Note: In the list of names only the ‘heads’ of household were listed. Wives and children were assumed to belong to the same contingent.)

(Bibliography: Edward Banks [Mayflower scholar]; “The English Ancestry and Homes of the Pilgrim Fathers. National Genealogical Society Quarterly, 62:88-90, Mourt’s Relation, published in London 1622. Mayflower Quarterly 51:59, Mayflower Home Page AOL and E-mail Calebj@aol.com)

[Editor’s Note: Everyone has a bias; conspicuously missing are earlier trips to North America by Leif Erickson and other Viking voyagers 500 years before Columbus.]

Groton Historical Society Newsletter

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