
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume 22 Issue 1

Groton, Vermont 05046

Winter 2009

GROTON FAMILIES

IN 1840



Peter Paul House home of the Groton Historical Society was built in 1840

CONTENTS

	Page
Groton Families in 1840...	1
GHS Web page	3
Gloucester County Road...	5
Map of Gloucester Road...	8
In Memoriam	11
GHS News	14

2009 OFFICERS

President	Richard Brooks
Vice President	Deane Page
Secretary	Diane Kreis
Treasurer	Joan Haskell
Web Site Editor	Donald Smith
Newsletter Editor	J. Willard Benzie

Eighty one heads of families were listed for the first time in the 1840 Groton census. And at least 58 families left town after 1830 for a net gain of 23 families in the decade and a total of 157 families here in 1840.

New heads of families were:

Phebe Abbott– m. A. Fife 1841

Charles Bailey– cousin of Flavel
Percival Bailey– son of Flavel

*Benjamin Bennett

Cutting Bennett– Timothy’s son

*Barnard Brickett

James Buchanan– new family

Silas Burnham– Moses nephew

Jeremiah Chase– Eben Fisk SiL

Elijah Clark- new family

Morris Clark– Samuel’s brother

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

April through October

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

(Continued from page 1)

James Corruith- new family
John Corruith- new family
Peter Corruith- new family
William Corruith- new family
James Craig- new family
(Moses) Wesson Crown
*Lyman Culver
Ira Darling– Samuel’s son
Judith Darling (widow of Robards)
Samuel Darling 2nd– Stephen son
Samuel Darling Jr.– Samuel’s son
William Darling– Moses son
*Lucius Divoll
William Dow- new family
Hugh Dunn- new family
James Dunn- new family
Isaiah Emery– Timothy’s son
John P. Emery– Noah’s neph.
Joshua Emery– Noah’s brother
Simon Emery– Noah’s brother
Timothy Emery- Timothy’s son
Charity Franklin (widow of John)
*William Furwell
John Gates- new family
Otis Glover- new family
Thomas Goodwin– Benjamin son
William Grant- new family
*Moses Hadley
*Daniel Hatch
Reuben Hill- new family
Elijah Hooper– James son
John Hooper– James son
Nathaniel Hooper– James Neph.
John Jones- new family
*William Jones

*N. H. Joy
McLane Marshall– Norris son
William Marshall– Norris son
Isaac Morse– Edmund’s son
Thomas Morse– Edmund’s son
*Michael Moulton
Jacob Orr- new family
James Orr- new family
Enoch Page– Enoch Jr.’s son
Jonathan Page- Enoch Jr.’s son
Samuel Page– Moses Hatch SiL
James Patterson- new family
Ebenezer Paul– Josiah’s son
Peter M. Paul– Josiah’s son
Jonathan Peck- new family
Asa Philbrick– Tim Emery SiL
James Renfrew– Andrew neph.
Andrew Ricker– Joseph’s son
Stephen Roberts– Daniel’s son
Thomas Scott- new family
William Taisey- John’s son
David Vance Jr.– David’s son
Ara Welch– Hosea’s son
George Welch– Medad’s son
Lebbeus Welch– Stephen’s son
Moses Weld- new family
*Ephraim Wheeler
G. W. Whitcher– Reuben’s son
James Whitehill- new family
Peter Whitehill- new family
(James) Milligan Whitehill
William Whitehill- new family
Levi Wilson- new family
William Wilson- new family
Hiram Wood- new family

The 76 heads of families in 1840 who had been here for 10 years or more were:

Jacob Abbott

Flavel Bailey

Timothy Bennett

Moses Burnham

Orange Clark

Samuel Clark

Nathaniel Cunningham

Daniel Darling

John Darling

Jonathan Darling

Moses Darling

Nathan Darling

Samuel Darling

Noah Emery

Timothy Emery

Ebenezer Fisk

Isaiah Frost

Moses Frost

Benjamin Goodwin

Reuben Goodwin

Rufus Goodwin

Isaac N. Hall

Jacob Hatch

John Hatch

Moses Hatch

Daniel Heath

Horatio Heath

Jacob Heath

James Heath

Jesse Heath

John Hill

Stephen Hodsdon

William Hodsdon

James Hooper

Samuel Hooper

*Simon Lathrop

Ephraim Low

Moses Lund

Enoch Manchester

Norris Marshall

Peter McLaughlin

Abram Morrison

Charles Morrison

Timothy Morrison

Edmond Morse

Enoch Page

Enoch Page Jr.

John Page

Moses Page Jr.

Moses Plummer

Samuel Plummer

Samuel Randall

Andrew Renfrew

John Rhodes

Oliver Rhodes

Joseph Ricker

Orson Ricker

Daniel Roberts

(Continued on page 4)

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB PAGE

Go to the Town's web page on the internet at <http://www.grotonvt.com/>
Then click on the link to the **Historical Society** in the list of organizations.

(Continued from page 3)

John Roberts
Daniel Stanley
William Stanley
David Silver
James Taisey
John Taisey
David Vance
William Vance
Evi Welch
Forrest Welch
Hosea Welch
Jonathan Welch
Medad Welch
Nehemiah Welch
Stephen Welch Jr.
Job Welton
Reuben Whitcher
Joseph Wormwood

- Asterisks indicates heads of families missing in the Groton Historical Society Family Records. About half the new families were children or relatives of families already here. SiL is for “Son-in-Law”.

The census of 1840 was the last one to list only the head of the family’s name and tally all others in the household by categories of sex and age groups. Starting in 1850 the names of all members of the household were

recorded with additional information about them. Because only the head of the household was named in 1840, many of the spouses and children’s names are also missing from the GHS Family Records.

The total population of Groton increased from 836 in 1830 to 928 in 1840 an 11 percent increase for the decade even though 58 families left Groton. Perhaps others also came and left town between censuses and were not counted. The country was expanding to the west and many Groton families joined this westward movement.

Average family size decreased from 6.2 to 5.9. Farming and lumbering were still the primary occupations, but craftsmen, merchants and professional services were increasing. Boundaries of Groton Village were surveyed and laid out in 1831 and it was booming with new activity in 1840.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY ROAD

By Dale Brown

Gloucester County Road was the “Main Street” of Groton for more than 30 years. And until 1797 it was the only road in town. It might have even become Route 302, joining Route 2 at Plainfield following the Winoski River to Lake Champlain. The road was used by early settlers from the Haverhill, MA area. In 1781 Jesse Heath with his new bride, Phebe (Straw), followed the Gloucester County Road to a high point of land and built their cabin near the present day Glover Road, later surveyed as lot 20. Prior to the first census in 1790 the family moved to Ryegate with their three children, but was back in Groton for the 1800 census.

In 1788 Groton authorities had the road cleared of brush and fallen trees to make it passable for carts and wagons. Brooks and streams were bridged with granite slabs or logs and swampy areas were laid with logs, called corduroy. Later the road was surveyed with transit and chain to establish the right-of-way from the Danville-Chelsea County Road to the Ryegate Town line. Of the 86

lots laid out in the First Division, those along or near this road were settled first.

But before Groton was chartered in 1789, several families had already settled in the northeast corner of town near Peacham [James Abbott on lot 1, Jonathan James on 2, Jacob Jenness then Israel Bailey on 3, Edmund Morse 4, Peter Wesson 5, and Archibald McLachlin 26]. They arrived by way of the Bayley-Hazen Road, and apparently crossed the open land cleared by Dr. Witherspoon’s* son in the northwest corner of Ryegate. There was also another family in the vicinity, possibly a servant of Witherspoon, but not recorded in the first census because he was colored. Perhaps it was John Phelps, listed as non-white in the 1800 census living on lot 6?

A road built in 1797 with taxpayer money to connect the northeast families with those on the Gloucester Road was called “The Great Road”. It ran southerly from the Peacham line to the Gloucester Road. The Pound Road, named for the

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

pound or stock yard erected by the settlers to keep stray animals until claimed by the rightful owner, served as a shortcut to the Great Road from the west. Early community activities took place along these three roads.

There were two stores, a tavern, a blacksmith shop, a small saw and gristmill plus a carding mill. Other businesses were a cobbler for shoes and harness supplies, a cooper for tubs and buckets plus a mechanic's workshop. There were two schools, a community building, three cemeteries, a pound for stray animals and the Village Common where the Militia trained. In 1803 there were five plank houses, numerous cabins, and buildings increased rapidly as lumber became available.

The State of Vermont authorized building roads in 1797 to connect all County Seats. Jonathan Macomber, who lived on lot 63 and Nicholas Buswell on lot 65 by the Gloucester Road, were commissioners for the Danville-Chelsea Road. Buswell, a road builder, headed the construction of the seven mile road through Groton. The road entered Groton from the south in lots 110 & 112 of the Second Division near Keenan Pond, and became a part of the Gloucester

County Road in lot 191 and lots 76 & 77 of the First Division. From there it proceeded in a northeasterly direction on a trail established by Edmund Morse. He built the first sawmill in 1790 at the present Ricker's Pond and lived on lot 4 by the Great Road near the site of Ralph Bailey's. The Danville-Chelsea County Road then followed the Great Road to the Peacham line. It was traveled by a scheduled stagecoach for lawyers, judges and clients going to and from court sessions. A stop-over for stage and travelers was the Carson House at the top of Caldwell Hill in Topsham, near the Groton line.

Gloucester County Road got its name when King Charles III granted Vermont to the State of New York. In order to survey townships in the eastern part of the state, a road was constructed following an earlier Indian trail from Lake Champlain to the Connecticut River, which was north of the area where the Green Mountain Boys patrolled the state. The land east of the Green Mountains was called Gloucester County by the New Yorkers.

The New York specula-

tors used this road for surveyors and supplies to establish town sites in Gloucester County. The Allen brothers of Green Mountain Boys fame realized this was happening and built a fort at the mouth of the Winooski River in 1773 to stop it. One of the towns that purchased their charter from New York was Bradford.

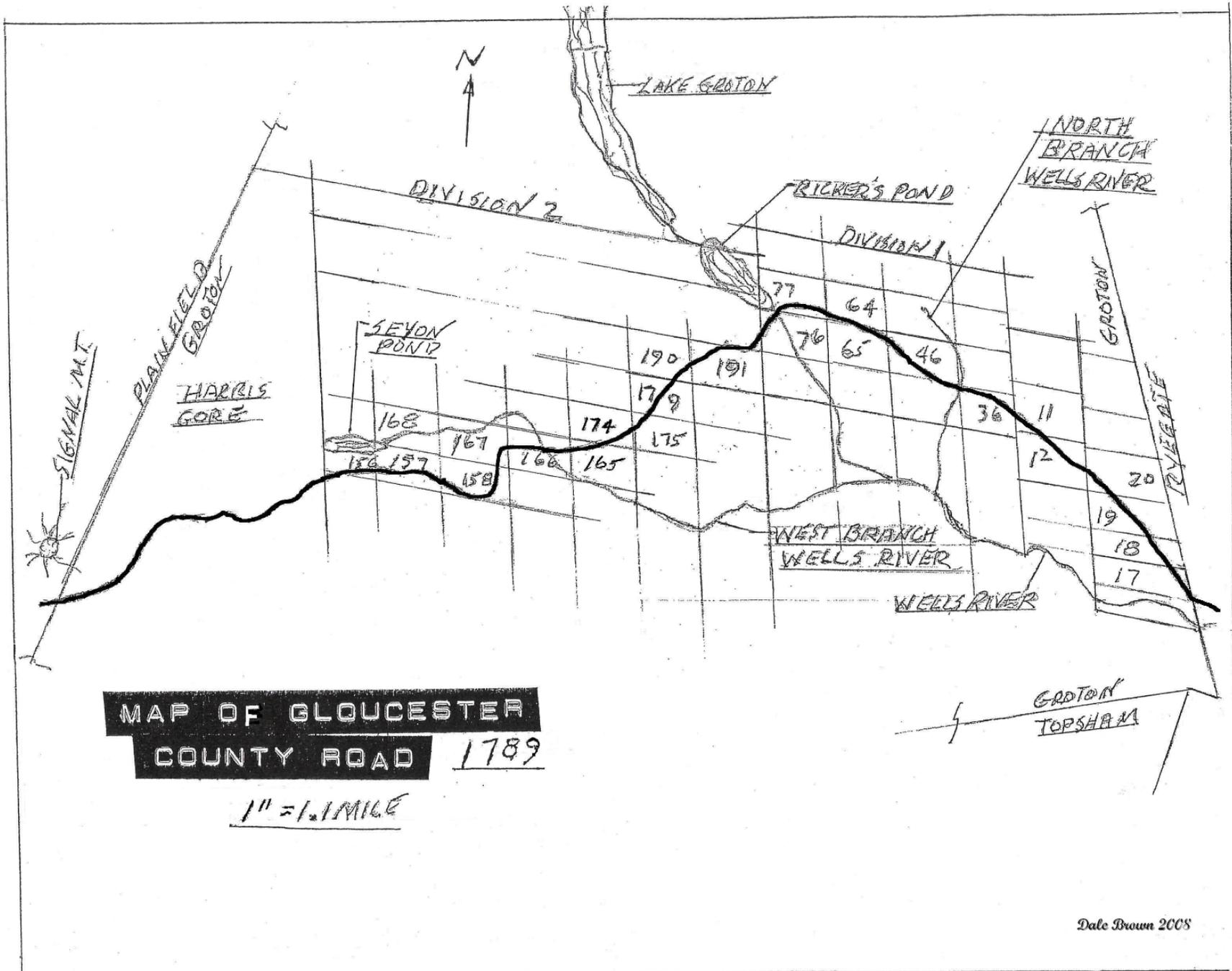
When Groton was chartered in 1789, this road crossed lots 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 36, 45, 46, 64, 65, 76 and 77 in the First Division. In the Second Division, it passed through lots 156, 157, 158, 165, 166, 167, 174, 175, 179, 190 and 191. [see pages 8 & 9] The road crossed Harris Gore and exited Groton on the north side of Knox Mountain. A Block House and living quarters were established in this area according to legend.

The road has been called by many names and even in *Mr. Glover's Groton* it is not mentioned as Gloucester County Road. During the town's early settlement, it was called the Upper Mill Road because it went from the Ryegate Line to the mill at Ricker's Pond. For nearly 100 years the eastern portion was also called the Gary Hill Road because his cabin was located at the brow

of the hill. Recently, its name was changed to West Witherspoon Road because it branches off the Witherspoon Road. At the town line of Ryegate, the Gloucester road intersected with another leading to Henderson's Mill located further west on the Wells River and it was known as the Lower Mill Road. One will note in the following description of its location that portions of the Gloucester County Road had different names.

Today the road crosses the land of Colleen Darling and then becomes the northern property line of Melvin Lyford, owner of the brick house. It diagonally crosses Patricia Pratt's land and continues in a north-west direction through James Royston and Raymond Gourdeau's land. It enters Howard Hill's lower field and crosses Glover Road by the stone wall at the Frost Cemetery. At the crest of the hill on Ronald Peterson's field, the road continues to Leonard Doscinski's, the former Morrison property, then crosses the Tannery Brook and Minard Hill road near their homestead. The Gloucester road now becomes Mt. Ada road and contin-

(Continued on page 10)



(Continued from page 7)

ues west as a trail, which was damaged during logging operations. It crosses the North Branch of the Wells River just beyond the former Fred Hayes property where the Indians reportedly had a temporary campsite during their travels between Coos Meadows and Canada. Continuing west the elevation increases across the property of Shirley Beamis. The driveway that led from her home to this road can still be seen. As it crosses the land of Henry Darling, at one time chartered for Peacham Academy, it retains the name of East Gloucester (*sic*). It crosses Goodfellow Road to become West Gloucester (*sic*) on the property of George Rocheford and William Bassett. Here the Danville-Chelsea County Road used the Gloucester Road for about three quarters of a mile. Today it is called the South County Road, until it crosses the Wells River at Ricker's Mill. The road continues west, past the old CCC camp, through the property of Robert Jennings where it is referred to as the Old County Road. Beyond the Jennings property, the Danville-Chelsea Road turns south and the

Gloucester Road continues west, past stone walls of old farmland, through Allen Goodine's property and a portion of the Groton State Forest. It crosses the West Branch of the Wells River at the intersection of Buzzy's and Seine's Roads. It leaves Buzzy's Road and becomes Signal Mountain Road, just south of Seyon Pond and enters Harris Gore. As Gloucester Road leaves Groton it crosses from the Connecticut to the St. Lawrence River Watershed and follows the Great Brook in Plainfield to the Winoski River.

The history of Gloucester County Road goes back to the days when Indians roamed the north woods of Canada and New England. In a report by Hosea N. Welch, the Indians established villages, campsites and well-beaten trails in this area. One of the main trails crossing Vermont to Lake Champlain began at the Connecticut River meadows and Coos village near Newbury. Indians planted their crops and used fish from the Connecticut River for fertilizer. After harvesting they returned by this trail to their winter quarters near Three Rivers, Canada. From the description, one camp-

site could have been on this trail by the North Branch of the Wells River.

The chronological list of events, during white man's era, on the trail that became Gloucester Road began in 1677 during King Phillip's War. Iroquois Indians came across the Lake from New York to burn villages and capture prisoners in the settlements of Hatfield and Deerfield, MA. The captives were herded back over the trail to the Iroquois Nation for adoption or ransom by the Indian Chief Asphyelon. A written report of this event by Quinton Stockwell, one of the captives, is the earliest evidence of a white man passing through what is now Groton.

At the time of King William's War in 1689 to 1697 and Queen Anne's War in 1701 to 1713, there were many forays of Indians, incited by the French to destroy New England frontier towns, often accompanied by their French allies. They used

the trail through future Groton and returned with their captives and plunder to Canada. During Queen Anne's War an Abenaki Indian from the Swanton area, known as Grey Lock by the settlers because of his permanent streak of gray hair, brought fear and nightmares to the New England colonies. With a few braves he went from town to town, killing one or two residents before moving on.

From 1704 to the fall of Quebec in 1759, and the ultimate defeat of the Saint Francis Indians by Roger's Rangers, there was almost continual unrest due to constant battles between France and England. A small fort was erected at the confluence of the Squaw-maug River in Newbury by Captain Jonathan Wells to combat these invasions, and from this, the river became known as the Wells River.

Of note was the raid in February 1704 when Major Hertel Rouville led a company

(Continued on page 12)

IN MEMORIAM

With Sincere Sympathy to the family and friends of members

Harold Bruce Puffer 1937—2008

Ina Mary (Benzie) Boucher Corthell 1929—2008

(Continued from page 11)

of about 200 French and 140 Indians on snowshoes, up Lake Champlain and the Winooski River, then down the trail through Groton to Deerfield, MA. Deerfield was burned to the ground for the third time; 40 inhabitants were slain and many others wounded. The 106 survivors started the cruel trip back to Canada, but on the way children were brained against trees because they were too bothersome and women who lagged behind were tomahawked and scalped. At White River the party split. Some went up the White River and the others continued to the Wells River, taking the trail through Groton, with sleds carrying their booty including an old church bell which may still be seen at Three Rivers.

A Mrs. Bradley, believed to be Mary (Williams) Bradley, was captured with others in Haverhill, MA, held at Coos in the summer of 1704, and traveled over the Indian trail in Groton. One hundred and twenty one years later, in 1825, her Great Granddaughter, Lydia (Bradley) Burnham came to Groton with her son, Moses Burnham, and his nephew, Isaac Newton Hall. Lydia died at Groton on Feb. 12, 1852 at the age

of 104 years and 9 months, the oldest person ever to live in town.

In 1725 a scouting party, under command of Captain Wright left Northfield, MA on the Connecticut River and hid their boats at the Wells River outlet. They proceeded on this trail, camping at present Ricker's Pond for the night before continuing on their way to Lake Champlain.

In 1747 four hundred French and Indians under command of Mons Debiline snowshoed over this trail to set fire and burn all the buildings in Charlestown, NH. Meanwhile, bands of Indians would break into small groups and raid the New England villages for ransom and slavery.

During the later part of the Revolutionary War a British scouting party came over this road in 1780 to Newbury and Corinth compelling the settlers to take an oath of allegiance to the King. It must have been unsuccessful, because later that year, 300 British soldiers came down the trail to destroy these towns. They were headed for the fort in Newbury but through intuition or scouting reports real-

ized the militia was waiting for them. Changing plans they took a trail over George Hill** through Topsham and Corinth to Chelsea, then following the White river they burned the town of Royalton.

An important dignitary traveling this road was his Royal Highness Prince Edward, the father of Queen Victoria of England. In the winter of 1789 and 1790, he was in Montreal when the St. Lawrence River froze trapping his ship. The Prince with his entourage snowshoed, using the Gloucester County Road through Groton, to a harbor on the East Coast where they could board a ship and return to England.

Today it is sad that the Gloucester County Road is almost nonexistent as it played such an important role in the Indian lives and migration. And almost gone is the history of its effect on early settlers in New England towns. It is unlike the Bayley-Hazen Road, built during the Revolutionary War and now a two lane highway its entire length, still following the original location with very few exceptions.

NOTES

* Witherspoon was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. His son cleared land in

Northwest Ryegate for Princeton University. However, the son, an Adjutant General to Washington, was killed during the Revolutionary War at the Battle of Brandywine. Witherspoon, President of New Jersey College, changed the name to Princeton and sold the Ryegate land which later, in 1789, was purchased by James and Abraham Whitehill.

** I should note that in the 1820's George Hill was the main road to Burlington. My ancestor, Stafford Brown, traveled on this road in a lumber wagon to meet his father and family there with their belongings. They came from Ireland to Canada and up the Richelieu River to Lake Champlain.

REFERENCES

A major portion of this paper is from the writings of Hosea N. Welch on Indians and Early Roads; *Mr. Glover's Groton*; the histories of the towns of Ryegate, Bradford and Orange; The Times Argus; Groton Town Records; and the 1857 Atlas of Caledonia County.

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Donald Smith a long time member of the Society who lives in CT and has roots in Groton, is the new web site editor. He is replacing Jim Dresser who moved to TN some time ago. Don is planning to add photos of Groton people, places and historical events to the web site in the future.

Fall Foliage Festival on October 4th was a huge success. Many people toured the house and viewed the exhibits that were on display.

Reginald Welch gave the Society a CD with 115,000 names of the Welch, Whitehill and other related families. This will greatly expand the GHS Family Records.

Wanted missing newsletters! The GHS newsletter file does not contain copies of the first two issues, No. 1 and No. 2 in 1988 and issue No. 11 in the spring of 1991. There are no issues in 1996 and 1998, but it is not known if there were any issues those years. If you have a copy of the missing issues GHS would appreciate getting a copy for their files. Thank you.

Dale Brown submitted the story about Gloucester County Road on page 5. He has also written about the manufacture of Page Chains in Groton and also about the proposed canal to connect Lake Champlain and the Connecticut river for water transportation. These stories are planned for future newsletters.

Other stories of Groton history that should be told are: turning works, pipe stem factory, Bobbin Mill, creamery, Haldane factory, Grange Fairs, Wells River Valley Fair Assoc., CCC camp and program, REA, McLure's Student Band, Rock Maple Ballroom – dances and roller skating, Dairy farms, Chicken farms, Timber industry, Granite industry, Boarding houses—Cliff House, Hatch Block, Weeds Hotel, Groton Hotel, M&WR RR, Bus service—Beckley's, VT Transit, Trucking, Grain stores, Restaurants, Service stations, Merchants. Can you think of others? Stories about these or any other Groton businesses and activities will be welcome articles for the newsletter.

CORRESPONDANCE

Kenneth Goad, of Luray, VA sent a donation to the society and asked about Martin Weld. He sent pictures of a wooden box marked "M. Weld Axes, Groton, VT". We responded that: "Martin Weld was born to Daniel and Lydia (Fuller) Weld on October 15, 1817 in Cornish, NH; He followed his older brother, Moses, to Groton, VT in 1836; Moses had gone with the woodchoppers to northern VT and was an expert axe maker; Martin learned the trade from him and bought out the business in 1841; Moses moved to ME and Martin made axes until 1870 when hand made axes were replaced by factory made ones; He lived in the third house north of the Methodist Church in Groton from 1844 until he died January 6, 1899. Martin married Imogene Lydia George and they had 5 children."

Eric MaGuire of CA visited Groton last August to locate graves of his Lund, Gary, Paul and Plummer ancestors and sent the following note: "It has been a couple of weeks since I got back from my trip to New England and I am still sorting out all that I found. I am just now getting to

my Groton cemetery photos and want to thank you for your help and direction. I made contact with your brother-in-law [*Harold Puffer*] and he was very helpful. He even drove us to a couple of the cemeteries I wanted to locate. Great guy! I will be putting the photos online on findagrave.com." He sent this picture of Peter Paul's tombstone for the GHS files. It is fairly high resolution and can be enlarged for display purposes.



Peter Paul's tombstone in section one row five old Village cemetery
Photo by Eric MaGuire.

Groton Historical Society Newsletter

J. W. Benzie, Editor

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