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# GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

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## OCTOBER IS ARCHIVES MONTH

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Archives are where history is stored. The Vermont Historical Society is celebrating with special programs on Vermont archives during the month of October. Librarians Paul Carnahan and Marjorie Strong will present “hidden” family history documents at the Leahy Library as part of a webinar program, “Beyond Ancestry.com” using archival collections for genealogical research. The webinar will be October first at 2:00 pm. Register online at: [vermonthistory.org/research/genealogy](http://vermonthistory.org/research/genealogy).

Leahy Library will have an open house on Tuesday October 15, from 5-7 pm, where you can learn more about VHS archives. Professor Jill Mudgett will discuss using collections in the college classroom with a case study of “Indian Joe”.

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Audio stories have the capacity to open a window into another world, and they can be shared in a number of ways. They can be broadcast on the radio, streamed online, combined with images to create audio slide shows, or used to transform a standing exhibit. Recording audio is increasingly easy in the digital world, and digital audio editing tools make it easy for individuals and communities to create rich and provocative sound stories.

Putting your collections online training will be held Tuesday, October 22, from 2-5pm at St. Michael's College. Have you been wondering how to get your collections online but are worried that it is too hard and too expensive? The Vermont Historical Records Advisory Board is offering a three-hour workshop entitled Putting YOUR Collections Online. The hands-on workshop will use Omeka, a free, "web-publishing platform for the display of library, museum, archives, and scholarly collections and exhibitions."

The workshop will be given by Amber Billey, UVM Catalog/Metadata Librarian, at St. Michael's College on Tuesday, October 22, from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm. The workshop is free and is intended for archivists and collections managers who are comfortable with computer applications and with their organizations' historic collections.

Billey will lead workshop attendees through the process of starting an Omeka site for their collections. Participants should bring a flash drive with 20 collection images belonging to various collections and collection descriptions to go along with them. At least one of the collections to be entered into Omeka during the workshop should be an archival collection or paper item. Collection descriptions should include title, date/date ranges, description, and any people, organizations, or families affiliated with the collection.

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Omeka is an open-source platform that "is designed with non-IT specialists in mind, allowing users to focus on content and interpretation rather than programming. It brings Web 2.0 technologies and approaches to academic and cultural websites to foster user interaction and participation." Participants who would like to learn more about Omeka should visit the organization's website at <http://omeka.org>.

The Groton Historical Society is working on inventorying and cataloging their collections and developing a plan to protect and display them. The state of Vermont has required Town Clerks to record births, marriages, and deaths since 1779. In 1857, they were required to send copies of their records to the state. Then in 1919 a statewide index of vital records was created. This effort made it apparent that death records were underrepresented earlier, so the state had town clerks transcribe all pre-1870 gravestones in their towns. These records, currently held by the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, contain births, marriages, and deaths filed with the state between 1909 and 2008. . The collection includes more than 950,000 birth records, more than 1.3 million marriage records, and more than 600,000 death records. Names of parents and spouses have also been recorded, when available. Most of these Vermont records are online at [AmericanAncestors.org](http://AmericanAncestors.org)

The Groton Historical Society website has Groton census records 1790-1930, Burials in the village, Groton/Peacham, Darling, and West Groton cemeteries plus some private burial grounds, veterans of the Civil War, and genealogies of families in the 1790 census. There is a photo gallery with most of the Societies collection, and back issues of the newsletter from 1988-2013. You can also take a virtual tour of the Peter Paul House. You can access the GHS website on the internet by clicking [Historical Society](#) on the Groton Town website at <http://grotonvt.com/> .

Excerpts from  
**THE CIVIL WAR**  
(As Recollected by an Ordinary Soldier)  
By  
Seth N. Eastman M.D. (1843-1913)

*In observance of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War another excerpt from Dr. S. N. Eastman's story is given here. The first six excerpts about his experiences in the Civil War were in previous newsletters and covered his enlistment at St. Johnsbury, basic training at Montpelier, deployment to Washington, D. C., involvement in the battle at Lee's Mills, their advance on Richmond, his capture by the rebel forces, time as a POW, parole back to the Union Army, reuniting with his old company, and death of his closest friend.*

The last half of November and first part of December 1862 were used up by the army moving from Maryland to Fredericksburg Virginia, in another attempt to capture the rebel capital and thus smash the rebellion. The weather was now quite cold and the ground was frozen. There were snow storms of considerable severity. At times, six inches to a foot of snow fell and we had to sweep it away to get a place to lie down at night. We had fires, however, and I don't remember that we suffered from the cold. We felt well and had a lot to eat. Our regiment was then under the command of Nathaniel Lord, a man about 40 years of age. He was the youngest son of President Lord of Dartmouth College. His face always made me think of a lion. He had a very deep voice that could be heard at almost any distance. He was a hero to me, and in my estimation, one of the best officers in the army. Whatever he said was law to all his troops, although it was said he liked his whiskey and was sometimes under the influence of it. He was still an ideal soldier to all of us and we would do anything cheerfully under his orders. He had one failing, however, he was a worshiper of General McClellan and when that gentleman lost his command, Colonel Lord lost all interest in the war, and in a short time resigned and returned to pri-

vate life.

The 13th day of December, the battle of Fredericksburg was fought. We were in plain sight of it, but never got into the real thick of the battle. This time, we were in the reserves and stood up to arms all during the battle, but lost no men. About all I can remember of the fight was that I was there. Then came the defeat of our army and the retreat back across the Rappahannock River. I remember this part all right, especially about being under arms all day , and then again all night, with nothing to eat and no sleep. It made us all very tired and we all longed for the cold, cruel war to end.

We marched up the south bank of this river and went into camp at a place called Falmouth and built shanties to live in. This we called our winter quarters. We stayed at this camp all winter with the exception of about ten days, when we went on an expedition that is known to posterity as a Mud March, of which I will now tell all I can remember. We left this camp on May 4, 1863, for good to participate in the movement under Hooker to capture the rebel capital of Richmond. During this campaign, the great battle of Chancellorsville, and the second battle of Fredericksburg were fought, and the Confederate general Stonewall Jackson, was killed as he was trying to flank our position, and capture and hold the bridges across the river by which we were trying to escape after the disaster at Chancellorsville.

To go on with the story of the Mud March from which I digressed in the above paragraph, let me say that General Burnside, who was so badly beaten at Fredericksburg before, wanted to do something to increase his fame or to decrease the shame of being the military chief, got the idea into his head that he could make a campaign in mid-winter on the frozen ground and surprise the enemy, and at the same time astonish the military world and perhaps out do Hannibal and Napoleon, so he started the army on frozen ground. The roads seemed paved with granite so solid were they frozen. The artillery went with ease and the infantry footing was good, and on the first day we went about 20 miles, and about the same the next day, but on the third day , there came a thaw, the reg-

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*(Continued from page 5)* **civil war**

ular January thaw, and the weather seemed like spring, with warm rain and plenty of it. The result was the bottom fell out of all the roads and the artillery went down until the guns were level with the ground, and the mud was knee deep on the grassy ground, and much deeper in the highways. Therefore the movement had to be abandoned. At this same time we were in the enemy country and without food. Something had to be done and immediately, so a retreat was ordered, and then it was found that this could not be done either, as the army was very definitely stuck in the mud. Then the great General Burnside began to realize how little he knew about war and Military Science, and the infantry had to be called in to help the artillery out of the mud. We cut poles, carried them on our shoulders to corduroy the roads for miles. Then we had to get levers and pry up the guns and then push to help the horses drag the guns. Thus we had to work night and day for about a week, or until the ground froze again, and we were wet to the skin, tired and discouraged and dirty the whole time. At this time, we all began to find fault with the general who, by his foolishness, had caused us all this hardship and misery, and some said they would shoot the damn fool on sight, and I heard that balls were fired at him and some passed through his tent at night. Anyway, he became alarmed and left the army with orders to retreat to their old camp at Falmouth. He left us because he was afraid to stay. After about 10 days of the hardest work we ever did in our lives, we finally did make it back to this camp.

We found this camp as we had left it, and went to work to make ourselves as comfortable as we were before we started that fool march, and in a few days, everything was going along as usual.

This disastrous march caused the army to get a new commander so General Joseph Hooker took up the burden of the command where Burnside had laid it down and he proved himself a poor man for such a great place, but he was not as bad as Burnside. In fact, he couldn't be. The army of the Potomac had at this time, in round numbers, 200,000 men, and it took a good man to handle them and compete with General Robert E. Lee, the rebel general who was the greatest military genius that lived in the world. His army was devoted to him and was nearly the size of the army of the Potomac. His army was called the Army of

Northern Virginia, and better men never carried muskets.

After the Mud March of Burnside, we went back , as I said before, to our camp at Falmouth, Virginia. This was about January 15, 1863. We had no more battles until May 5, when Hooker, the commander, made another unsuccessful attempt to capture Richmond, and the second Fredericksburg battle and the affair at Chancellorsville were pulled off in this advance. The 6th Vermont Regiment, the one I was in, was in these affairs along with the old Vermont Brigade. We had to cross the Rappahannock River under fire. My duty was to jump into a pontoon boat with fourteen others and be rowed across the river, and as the boat struck land on the opposite side, jump out and open fire. There were about one thousand men rowed across at a time, and thus the battle began. This was a very hazardous procedure and many of our men were killed and fell out of the boats before we made the shore. We managed to capture a little place and hold it, however, while our engineers laid down a pontoon bridge, and then the main army came marching across in force and this is how we forged a passage across the river on May 4, 1863. While doing this several batteries covered us and made things very interesting for the enemy.

After crossing, we spread out on the spot below Fredericksburg, and prepared to attack the celebrated city, but the enemy were so discouraged at the way we had crossed that they did not feel like fighting, now that we were on dry land, so they fell back to their strongly fortified positions on the hills in back of Fredericksburg and waited, where they could fight us from behind breastworks. However, in order to continue the advance, it was necessary to drive them out, so we were ordered to prepare ourselves to storm the fortifications. We piled our knapsacks and haversacks in great piles and stood in line, waiting for the word to attack the strongest fortifications in the world. There a bank, a miry swamp, and a river in front, which must be crossed any way we could. All the time we were waiting for the order to attack, hundreds of guns on the hills around us were shooting into us and it seemed to me that all of us would be killed before the order to attack ever came.

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### Some Basketball Teams from the Past



1920's Boys Basketball Team



1930's Girls Basketball Team





**1940's Boys Basketball Team**



**1950's Girls Basketball Team,**

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# **GHOSTS AND GOBLINS**

## **A brief history of HALLOWEEN origins (from Awake, September 2013)**

In the 5th century BC, the Celts observed the festival of Samhain at the end of October, when they believed ghosts and demons roamed the earth more than at other times. In the first century AD the Romans conquered the Celts and adopted their spiritualistic rituals of Samhain. In the 7th century AD Pope Boniface IV is said to have established the annual celebration of All Saints Day to honor martyrs. Hallow is an old word meaning “saint”. All Hallows’ Day (also known as All Saints’ Day) is a holiday to honor dead saints. The evening before All Hallows’ Day was called All Hallow Even, later shortened to Halloween. In the 11th century the second of November was designated as All Souls’ Day to commemorate the dead. Observances surrounding All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day are collectively called Hallowtide. In the 18th century the name of the holiday Hallow Evening first appeared in print as Halloween. In the 19th century people immigrating from Ireland to the United States brought with them Halloween customs that, in time, combined with similar customs of emigrants from Britain and Germany, as well as Africa and other parts of the world. And in the 20th century Halloween became a popular nationwide holiday in the United States. Commercial interests in the 21st century have turned Halloween into a multibillion dollar industry with candy, costumes and celebrations.

Remember when the goal was to scare people on Halloween? Like moving things around or hiding them, and mischievous pranks (tipping over the out-house etc.), or jumping out from behind bushes like a zombie. Perhaps changing the custom to dressing up in a scary costume and going door to door for candy (Trick or Treat) is as much a result of damages from the earlier activities as it is from commercial interests.

## FAMILIES IN 1810 GROTON CENSUS

By 1810 the pioneers and early settlers in Groton had the town organized and functioning with regular town-meetings to decide what the most urgent needs were and how they could be met with the knowledge, skills and abilities of its citizens. One third of the 37 families living here in 1800 had left and an additional unknown number came and went between the 1800 and 1810 censuses. But 48 new families were listed in the 1810 census making a total of 73 families living in Groton. Twenty eight new families were children or relatives of those who came earlier, **Jacob Abbott**, nephew of James; **Smith Bailey**, son of Benjamin; **Moses and Stephen Darling**, sons of John; **Moses Emerson**, son-in-law of Jonathan James; **Caleb Emery**, son of John; **Abram Frost**, son of William; **Daniel and John Heath**, sons of Jesse; **Lachlan and Peter McLachlin**, sons of Archibald; **Hosea Welch**, son of Jonathan; **Stephen Welch**, son of Edmund; **Bethuel Fuller**, son-in-law of John Darling; **William Hodgden and David Jenkins**, sons-in-law of Robards Darling; **Obadiah Low**, uncle of Ephraim Gary; **Henry Lowe**, cousin of Ephraim; **Isobel (Straw) Page** sister-in-law of Jesse Heath, and her sons **Enoch Page Jr.** and **Moses Page**; **Josiah Paul**, brother-in-law of Ephraim Gary; **Stephen Roberts**, stepson-in-law of Dominicus Gray; **William Stanley**, son-in-law of Jesse Heath; **Ephraim Weston (Wesson)**, brother-in-law of Edmund Morse; **Reuben Whitcher**, son-in-law of Dominicus Gray; **Betsey Morrison**, widow of Bradbury; and **Dolly Remick**, widow of John.

The new family names that were not connected with earlier families at the time of the 1810 census are: Asa Annis, Rachel Bennett (widow of Tilton who died before the census) and her son Timothy, Arthur Bragden, Andrew Carter, Ebenezer and Edmund Fisk, Daniel and Michael Floyd, Jeremiah Hidden, John Hogin, Ithama Littlefield, Simon Mallory, James Nelson, Oliver Parker, James Renfrew and his son James 2nd, Oliver Rhodes, Stephen Rowllins, and David Vance.

**Annis, Asa** born in 1786 was living with another male about the same age in the 1810 census of Groton, possibly a brother? Asa

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married Philena Bidwell in 1811 and moved to Bath, NH and then to Littleton about 1820. The Annis family has 8,929 names in the GHS family records.

**Bennett, Rachel** widow of Tilton had 4 children, Dolly, Sally, Betsey, and **Timothy** who later moved to Wisconsin. There are 4,255 names in the GHS family records of the Bennett family.

**Carter, Andrew** was under 45 and his wife was 45+ with 4 boys and 4 girls in 1810 census. He has not been connected to the Carter families in the GHS family records: Luther with 302 names, James 288 names, William 80 names, or Eliphalet with 34 names.

**Fisk, Ebenezer** was born at Newbury, VT in 1783 and died at Groton in 1858. He married Susan Scales in 1806. There are 24 names in the GHS records of this family, another Ebenezer born in NH and died at Newbury, VT married Sally Hood and there are 99 names in that family. The two Ebenezer families have not been connected in our records.

**Hidden, Jeremiah** was the Groton Town Clerk at the time of his death in 1813. He married Elizabeth Hamblet in 1808 and they had one daughter (perhaps Julia Ann Hidden who was buried in the Groton/Peacham cemetery) His widow married Medad Darling in 1814.

**Nelson, James** was born August 20, 1786 in Ryegate and died in 1864 in Canada where he and his wife, Hannah Vance, raised their family. In the 1810 Groton census they had one boy and one girl less than 10 years of age. There are 2,120 names in the Nelson family .

**Renfrew, James and son James 2nd** the father was born in 1758 at Paisley, Scotland and came to Groton in 1804. He married Margaret Smith in 1788 and they raised a family of 7 children: **James 2nd** m. Jean Nelson, John, Margaret, William, Andrew, Robert, and Matthew. There are 381 names in the Renfrew family records.

**Rhodes, Oliver** was born in 1765 in NH and died in 1852 at Groton where he is buried in the west Groton cemetery. He married Martha Pratt and they raised 7 children: Sally, Mary, John, Lucy, Josiah, Martha, and Charlotte. There are 1,125 names in the Rhodes family records.

**Vance, David** was born in 1788 in MA and came to

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Groton in 1803 with his mother. He married Alice Perkins and they raised 12 children: David, William, Aaron, Betsey, Abigail, Daniel, Jane, Stephen, Hannah, Nathan, George, and Olive. There are 1.246 names in the GHS family records of the Vance family.

### FAMILIES NOT YET IN GHS RECORDS

**Bragden, Arthur** b. 1754 in ME, d. 23 Sep 1833 in ME; married first Jane Marr and had a boy and girl then married second Eleanor Preble and had 6 children. The family left Groton before the 1830 census.

**Fisk, Edmund** and his wife were both 26-45 years old and had 2 boys and one girl under 10 years old in the 1810 census.

**Floyd, Daniel** and **Michael** were living next door to each other and may be related. Daniel was born in 1775 in NH, was married and had one boy and 2 girls in the 1810 census. Michael and his wife were over 45 years of age and no others were listed with them.

**Hogin, John R.** and his wife were 45+ years old in 1810 with one male 26-45, one less than 10, and one female 16-26 in the family.

**Littlefield, Isthama** and his wife were 26-45 in 1810 and had one son and 3 daughters less than 10 and one female 45+ in the family

**Mallory, Simeon** b. 1788 in MA, d. 26 Apr 1861, m. but his wife's name is unknown. The family left Groton after the 1820 census

**Parker, Oliver** family had 2 boys over 10 and 3 girls under 10 in the 1810 census and parents were 45+ years old. The family was not listed in later censuses.

**Rowlins, Stephen** b. 28 Mar 1750 in MA, d. 1842 in ME; he married Hannah Stanley

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## **GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS**

Visit GHS Web page at Historical Society on <http://www.grotonvt.com/>

One purpose of the Groton Historical Society is to preserve the history of families in Groton and beyond by collecting and archiving family records, photographs, heirlooms and artifacts.

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The Vermont Historical Society announces that registration is now open for three new online courses in the Caring for Yesterday's Treasures-Today series. The series, launched in January 2013, offers free online courses focused on the preservation of archival and historical collections. Tailored to fit the needs and schedules of staff and volunteers at libraries and archives, each course includes four to six 90-minute, interactive webinars presented by preservation experts.

Participants will earn a certificate of completion if they attend all the webinars in a course and submit simple homework assignments. Courses are conducted through the Connecting to Collections Online Community, and participants will be able to continue the conversation with instructors and classmates in the Community once the course has concluded. Participants are encouraged to submit specific questions about collections care to ensure that the courses are directly relevant to their needs .

Since its launch in January, five courses on a range of topics have been offered, and more than 1,500 certificates of completion have been awarded. All previous courses have been archived on the Online Community where webinar recordings, associated handouts, and resources can be found. Past topics have included collections care basics, risk evaluation, writing a disaster response plan, caring for digital materials, and caring for photographs .

Caring for Yesterday's Treasures-Today is made possible through an Institute of Museum and Library Services Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Continuing Education grant to Heritage Preservation. The website and webinars are produced by Learning Times.

Registration is free. If you've participated in a previous course, please register again.

Course Schedule:

Fundraising for Collections Care - September 23, 25 & October 1, 3 (2:00 to 3:30 pm)

Caring for Audiovisual Materials - October 16, 21, 23, 28, 30 from (2:00 to 3:30 pm)

Outreach Activities for Collections Care - November TBA

Please contact the VHS Community Outreach Coordinator Laura Brill at [laura.brill@state.vt.us](mailto:laura.brill@state.vt.us) or call (802) 479-8522 for more information on signing up for a free on-line course.

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At Vermont Historical Society's 175th Annual Meeting & Conference this year, the roots of Vermont's organic farming movement was explored. Keynote speaker was Professor Dona Brown of the University of Vermont. Panel discussions focused on the 1970s, a time when Vermont's communes, colleges and co-ops played significant roles in shaping today's interest in local and organic food systems.

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September meeting of GHS was a working meeting to get the Peter Paul House ready for Fall Foliage Day in Groton on October 5th this year. Open House will be staffed by members to guide visitors and explain about the items on display.

The All-Class Reunion held in June was a huge success with 120 alumni (graduates, students and teachers) and 48 guests participating. All but 12 of the alumni, and some of the guests had their pictures taken for an All-Class Reunion yearbook. The booklet will be on sale Fall Foliage Day at the Peter Paul House for \$2.50 or can be mailed to you for \$3.00 while supplies last.

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