
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume 14 Issue 3

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Summer 2001

REVIEW OF GROTON, VERMONT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This is the second in a planned series of articles on Groton in the twentieth century. The second decade - the 'teen' years - from 1910 through 1919 is gleaned mainly from The Groton Times published by Charles C. Lord and Mr. Glover's Groton published by the Society.

The editor



J. R. Darling
1823-1910



I. M. Ricker
1839-1910

TWENTIETH CENTURY GROTON

The Second Decade 1910 - 1919

Groton lost two of its leading citizens in 1910. The Honorable Jonathan Robards Darling, who died in July, and Isaac McClary Ricker, who died in August. These two men formed a partnership in 1866 and purchased the village sawmill from their father-in-law, John Taisey. They both married daughters of John and Phebe (Heath) Taisey, namely Sarah Marie and Mary Jane. The sawmill was rebuilt and modernized with the first circular saw in town. They expanded the lumber business with purchases of timber lands in West Groton and Harris Gore, and with the convenience of the Montpelier & Wells River Rail Road, after 1873, shipped their lumber to

OFFICERS

President	Richard Brooks
Vice President	Norma Hosmer
Secretary	Diane Kreis
Treasurer	Josephine French

MEETING SCHEDULE (second Tuesday)

Aug	14 th at 10 AM
Sep	11th at 10 AM
Oct	9th at 10 AM

Peter Paul House, 253 Scott Hwy.

(Continued from page 1)

markets outside Groton. In 1884 the partnership was dissolved with I. M. Ricker retaining the sawmill and J. R. Darling the timber land in Harris Gore.

Several years later in the early 90's, when much of the timber in Groton had been harvested, Judge J. R. Darling had a dam constructed at the foot of "Clough" meadow forming Darling Pond (now Seyon Pond). There he erected a sawmill and boarding house and began an extensive lumbering operation utilizing the timber resource in Harris Gore under the direction of his son Robert Nelson Darling. This was a prosperous business which he later sold to S. F. Griffith. In 1910 Theodore N. Vail, President of American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T), purchased the property, remodeled the boarding house for a vacation home, and changed the name to "Vail's Pond". Judge Darling also owned a lucrative mercantile business in the village called J. R. Darling & Sons (now Groton General) with his son John Taisey Darling as general manager.

I. M. Ricker expanded the lumber business at his mill in the village with purchases of timber land in the south part of Groton and especially in Topsham. The business flourished right up to his death in 1910. His lumber yard was always a place of activity. Every winter the entire slope from the mill pond to the Railroad Station flat was piled high with logs, and during much of the year the drone of the saw was a familiar sound in the village. His widow, Mary Jane (Taisey) Ricker, gave the Town Clock, which was installed in the Methodist Church in 1912, to the Town of Groton in his memory.

Both men, Honorable J. R. Darling and I. M. Ricker, invested heavily

in the granite industry as the timber resource diminished. They built stonesheds to manufacture granite products and leased them to a number of firms. Many of these firms continued very successfully through the teen years, changing hands from time to time.

Automobiles were seen more frequently in Groton during the second decade of the twentieth century. A number of accidents and near misses at the intersection of US302 and the railroad just west of the village, prompted the Montpelier and Wells River Rail Road to build an overpass in 1910. The poor visibility travelling from West Groton to the village through the "S" curves increased the risk of an accident before the overpass was built.

The creamery in Groton which chiefly made butter closed in 1915, but the following year, David Buttrick began pasturizing fluid milk and soon sold the business to H. P. Hood & Sons, who continued the operation. (See the list of farms with 5 or more cows in Groton in the early 1900's, compiled by Raymond Page from his memory, elsewhere in this issue.)

Charles C. Lord, editor, publisher and printer of the *Groton Times* for 19 years went to Island Pond in 1916 to publish the *Essex County Herald*. The *Groton Times* was then printed by the *St. Johnsbury Republican* newspaper and the *Woodsville Times* for a few more years until it ceased publication in the 1920's. One of the publishers after Mr. Lord left was S. Burton Heath.

A major fire in town during the second decade was Samuel Welch's General Store which burned in May 1916.

The Groton Novelty Works, near the iron bridge on the powder spring road, continued to prosper during the second decade producing a variety of wood products and employing a number of men in town. About 1910 the lumber company of Miller & Ayer acquired large timber holdings around Groton Pond which would feed readily into the lake. They built a new mill and boarding houses on the site of the former Baldwin & Hazen sawmill, reconstructed the old spur railroad leading from the Groton Pond Station to the mill, and acquired a post office. Rob Miller bought out Mr. Ayer in 1915 and operated the mill into the next decade when the property was sold to the State and became a major part of *Groton State Forest*.

Although Groton Pond had only a handful of cottages, or camps, on its shores in the first decade, the number gradually increased during the second. The citizens of Groton village enjoyed electric lights and asphalt sidewalks which had been installed at the end of the first decade. James Frost operated one of the first liquor saloons in Groton from May 1, 1913 to May 1, 1914.

World War I had a big impact on Groton. President Woodrow Wilson, who had defeated President Taft in 1912, won reelection in 1916 largely on his effort to keep the United States neutral. But when Germany resumed its unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 the U. S. entered the war on April 6, 1917. Thirty nine men and one woman from town were in the armed services. Four were wounded in action and one, Wendell Lord, was killed in action on November 8, 1918 in France only 3 days before the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. (See list of

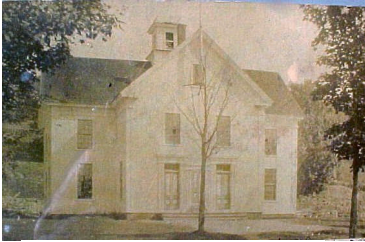
Groton's WWI veterans elsewhere in this issue.)

After the war the Town voted to reinstate the High School. Waldo Glover was Superintendent of Schools from 1910 to 1915 and conducted a two year high school until the State required a second teacher and the town discontinued the high school altogether. Groton High School was reinstated in 1919 with J. Stewart Garvin as Principal and Leonard Smith as Superintendent. Mr. Garvin was the only teacher the first year. He taught English, Latin, Algebra and General Science. Following years he was joined by Miss Shields and Mr. Carl Samuelson. The first class included three girls and nine boys: Hazel Johnson, Dorothy Miller, Alice Dunn, Crawford Adams, Edward Bailey, Edwin Carter, Ross Clark, Uric Legare, Donald Morrison, Lorimer Puffer, Milton Ricker and Cyrus Eastman.

The second decade ended with the return of those serving their country in the military to a town struggling with recovery from the war effort and a general economic slowdown. The saying of the day was "How ya goin' to keep 'em down on the farm, once they've been to Paris?" Many did come back to the home farm, but many others left for greener pastures. And the population of Groton continued to decrease from its high of 1900.



SOME GROTON SCENES IN THE TEEN YEARS 1910 - 1919



High School reinstated



Westville School house



Some of the 40 Groton citizens in World War I



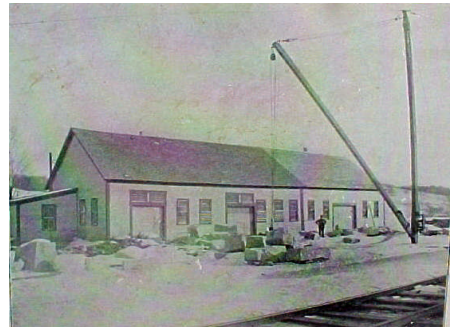
B. F. Clark Residence



I. M. Ricker's Residence



J. Benzie and Ford Touring Automobile



M. T. Benzie Company Stone Shed



I. M. Ricker Sawmill



Baptist Church



A. H. Ricker Sawmill



Methodist Church



M&WR RR at Groton Pond



M&WR RR Station at Groton

Farms in Groton

with 5 or more cows in early 1900's
(compiled from memory - Raymond Page)

1. Taisey (J. French farm)
2. Willy Welch
3. Burt Renfrew
4. I. N. Hall
5. Charles Ricker
6. Raymond Page
7. H. M. Ricker
8. Albert Achilles
9. Orrin Beck
10. Mert Carter
11. Samuel Page
12. Carl Vance
13. Aaron Frost
14. Carlos Page
15. Albert Page
16. Roy Vance
17. Vance Brothers
18. Herbert Vance
19. Willie Darling
20. Henry Goodwin
21. Malcolm Graham
22. Bert Hood
23. Harvey Orr
24. Lewis Lund
25. Lebius Welch
26. Will Dunn
27. Jacob Welch
28. Wint Morton
29. Calvin Darling
30. Herbert Hood
31. Frank McCrillis
32. Frank Crown
33. Fred Hayes
34. Percy Bailey
35. Harley Edwards
36. Frank Carrouth
37. Charlie Carrouth
38. Orrin Crown
39. Sam Ricker
40. Orange Frost

41. Lee Frost (Hatch Place)
42. Ralph Evans
43. Hosea Welch
44. Jack Morrison
45. Noah Emery (Clint)
46. Ebenezer Baldwin
47. George Carrouth
48. Delvan Page
49. Nelson Whitehill
50. Joe Ricker
51. Joe Fellows
52. Henry Cassidy
53. Ed Pierce
54. Steve Welch
55. Ralph Bailey
56. Edward Bailey
57. David Whitehill
58. Herman Ricker
59. Fred Sayers
60. Glover Farm
61. Orange Welch
62. Lyman Blanchard
63. Orlo Goodwin
64. James Sanders
65. Isaiah Frost
66. Washington Orr

Peter Paul House



World War I veterans

Bold = wounded in Action

Italics = Commissioned Officers

Bailey, Ernest 151st Dep. Brig.
Bushnell, Edward H. Med. Corps
Caldwell, Nathan R. M. O. T. C.
 Dana, Walter C. Co. M 58th Inf.
 Dana, William G. Co. F 101st Am Tn
 Dennis, Grace M. Army Nurse
 Foley, Arthur E. Co. M 58th Inf
 Foley, Frank N. Co. M 58th Inf
 French, Clarence Co. C 310th Inf
 French, George Co. E 309th Inf
 Freer, Lester S. A. T. C.
 Hanchett, Frank Roy Co M 58th Inf
Heath, S. Burton Hd Co. 102nd Inf
 Heath, Waldo H.
 Hendry, Harvey C. Co. G 103rd Inf
Hook, Justin
 Lindsey, Ned B. 151st Dep. Brig.
Lord, Wendell E. Co. F 101st Am. Tn
 Lund, Austin G. Co. F 101st Am. Tn.
 Mason, Frank A. Co. E 303rd Inf
 McQueen, Joseph
 Merrin, Henry T. Co. F 101st Am. Tn.
 Moulton, John C. Co. F 101st Am. Tn.
Nelson, Forrest P. Co. C 302nd M G
 Page, Moses
 Page, William D. Co. F 101st Am Tn.
Ricker, Isaac M. Hg. Co. 102nd Inf
 Smith, Dwight A. Nav. Aux. Res.
 Smith, Gerald S. A. T. C.
 Taylor, Harold O. Co. D Ret. Depot
 Thurston, Samuel W. S. A. T. C.
Tillotson, Henry L. Emb. Hosp. 1st Cav
Tinkham, Clarence H. Co. G 101st Inf
 Welch, Clyde I. Co. F 101st Am. Tn.
 Willey, George
 Williams, Carrol M. M. G. Co. 101st Inf
 Williams, Leslie A. Tr E 2nd Cav.
 Williams, Perley
 Wright, Sydney J. Co. F 101st Am. Tn.

COMMENTS SOUGHT

Additions, corrections, comments and suggestions to improve the accuracy and content of the article reviewing the second decade of Groton History in the twentieth century will be welcome. Addendum can be published in future newsletters.

Watch for the review of the third decade - 1920 through 1929. Send any suggestions for events and people that should be included to the Groton Historical Society, attention editor.

Volunteers to write reviews of the other decades in the twentieth century will be appreciated. If you don't want to write the whole article, just send in the information about people and events that you would like to have included. If you have an interesting story about people and events in and around Groton why not share it with others interested in the history of our town?

WANTED

NEW MEMBERS

Annual dues are only \$5.00 and there is no joining fee. Come to the next meeting and help preserve the history of old Groton for the next generation. Anyone not able to attend meetings can send their dues to the Groton Historical Society, P.O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY GOES DIGITAL

The Groton Historical Society recently purchased computer equipment in order to archive many of the pictures, postcards and documents at the historical house. A laptop computer was chosen because of its portability; the manufacturer is Dell, chosen because of their high quality reputation. Among other features, the computer has a large capacity hard drive for on-board storage of files (either text or picture) and a read-write CD drive which allows files to be recorded onto blank CDs for viewing from other computers. In order to place the files onto the computer, a scanner was also purchased. As an example of the possibilities, all of the society's postcards were recently scanned onto the computer hard drive. Then with the click of a button, they were shown as a "slide show" with each picture displayed sequentially on screen with titles. The slide show can be then recorded onto a blank CD for archiving purposes or presentation on another computer. Also, a copy of any individual picture may be printed.

Project implementation was greatly assisted by Dale Brown who made a generous cash donation and Kim Stenson who donated a printer. Willard Benzie and Dick Kreis got the project off the ground and welcome any assistance over the coming months in organizing and scanning the society's documents and pictures.

Groton Historical Society Newsletter

J. W. Benzie, Editor

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