
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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GROTON PIONEERS



H. Darius James 1924—1998

A pioneer of the Fall Foliage Day
Chicken Pie Supper in Groton, VT

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Part VII—JONATHAN JAMES

This is the seventh in a series on the early pioneers in Groton. Jesse Heath, Aaron Hosmer, James Abbott, Edmund Morse, John Darling's families, and Israel Bailey were in previous issues.

Mr. Glover's Groton names pioneer Jonathan James the second settler in town; arriving here in 1785, three years after James Abbott came in 1782. However, records seem to indicate that Jesse Heath had built a cabin earlier and his first three children were born in Groton, but they had apparently moved, or were overlooked, when the proprietors met on May 6, 1788 as they are not listed among the five families already settled,

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MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

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

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and when the first U. S. census was taken in 1790 they were enumerated in Ryegate. Jesse Heath's family was back in Groton for the 1800 and 1810 censuses. Evidence also suggests that Aaron Hosmer spent a lot of time hunting, fishing and trapping in Groton earlier. And he was enumerated in the 1790 and 1800 censuses; but he was not listed among the settlers in 1788. Thus the James Abbott and Jonathan James families were recognized by Waldo Glover as the first two families to settle in town.

Jonathan James was born in January 1755 in Grafton Co., NH to John and Sarah (Sanborn) James. His siblings in the GHS family records are one brother (Jobesh) and 4 sisters (Sally, Mercy, Mary and Anna) and three half-brothers (Benjamin, Samuel and John Jr.) and two half-sisters (Susanna and Elizabeth) from his father's first wife, Mercy Batchelder. Jonathan married Deborah Batchelder in 1784 and came to Groton from Meredith, NH in

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The Jonathan James family reconstructed from family records and census records

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Year born</u> | <u>1790</u> | <u>1800</u> | <u>1810</u> |
|---|------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Jonathan | b. 1755 | 35 | 45 | 55 |
| Deborah | b. 1756-65 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45+ |
| [David | b. 1784? | 6 | 16 | 26 m. Susannah Hosmer 1825] |
| Unk daughter | b. 1784? | 6 | 16 | [26 m. or d. before 1810?] |
| Unk daughter | b. 1787? | 3 | 13 | [23 m. or d. before 1810?] |
| Sally? | b. 1789 | 1 | 11 | [21 m. Henry Lowe in 1807] |
| [Parentage is unknown, but she is thought to be Jonathan and Deborah's daughter?] | | | | |
| Mary Abbie | b. 1792 | | 8 | 18 Mar. Hosea Lowe in 1817 |
| Jonathan | b. 1794 | | 6 | 16 Mar. Sarah Pratt in 1818 |
| [Perhaps 2 dau. b. after 1800 census and recorded in 1810 as under 10 and 10-16] | | | | |
| Unk daughter | b.1800? | | | 10 |
| Unk daughter | b. 1802? | | | 8 |

1790 Males: 1 (under 16), 1 (16+); Females: 4

1800 Males: 1 (under 10), 1 (16-26), 1 (45+); Females: 3 (under 10), 1 (16-26), 1 (26-45) Note: Assumed unknown daughter 13 and Sally 11 are 2 females listed as "under 10" but it is possible that 1 or both older daughters died young and 1 or 2 more were born between 1790 & 1800 censuses.

1810 Males: 1 (10-16), 1 (16-26), 1 (45+); Females: 1 (under 10), 1 (10-16), 1 (16-26), 1 (45+)

1820 James family is not in the Groton census, but Henry & Hosea Lowe families are listed.

1785. Jonathan James and his family settled on what was later surveyed as lot number 2 when the proprietors voted on August 13, 1787 to have Ira Allen survey 100 acre lots in the first Division for each proprietor.

In the 1790 census of Groton the family is listed with one male 16 years of age or more (Jonathan) and one under 16 (perhaps David or maybe John), and four females (probably Sally, two unknown daughters and his wife, Deborah). In the 1800 and 1810 censuses the family had 8 and 7 members respectively. The James family moved to Troy, VT before the 1820 census, but two of their married daughters were enumerated in Groton with their families: Sally (Mrs. Henry Lowe) and Mary (Mrs. Hosea Lowe). In reconstructing the family from the census records (names of family members were not listed in census records until 1840), it appears that in 1790 they had Sally (1789), although her

parentage is not certain, and two other unknown daughters (b. about 1787 and 1784) and a son [possibly David (b. about 1784 who married Susannah Hosmer in 1825), or maybe John (b. 1780 who married Mehitabel Buzzell)]. In the 1800 census they had two more children Mary Abbie (b. 1792) and Jonathan (b. 1794) and in the 1810 census they apparently had two more daughters (names unknown b. about 1800 and 1802) or perhaps they had a couple of grand daughters living with them.

Jonathan James, James Abbott, and James Whitelaw were elected at the proprietors meeting of May 6, 1788 to lay out necessary roads in the town. At the first town meeting, after the town was organized, on March 20, 1797 Jonathan James was elected town treasurer. The first grand list recorded for Groton about 1803 has 16 acres,

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GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB PAGE

Easy access from <http://www.grotonvt.com>

History Review: A bit of history you might have missed **SCHOOL OF TRANSLATION IN TOLEDO**

(Awake, January 2007 p.12-14)

The 13th century was a time of bitter intolerance and extreme violence, when Europe was embroiled in the infamous Inquisition and the death-dealing Crusades. Yet, in the midst of this bloody era, a Spanish king, Alfonso X, also called Alfonso the Wise, tried to bring some sanity to the world. He is credited with a cultural awakening that is sometimes called the 13th century renaissance. The king brought new knowledge to Spain from distant lands. He was particularly interested in the fields of art, history, law, and science and this had a profound influence on the cultural development of Spain as well as the rest of Europe.

King Alfonso was instrumental in the formation of an academy where learned Jews, Muslims, and Christians could collaborate. To facilitate their work, he created and financed one of the world's first State libraries. The king himself actively participated in the writing and compiling of a whole range of works dealing with jurisprudence, science, and history. He also encouraged the development of lit-

erature and poetry, fields in which he himself excelled.

Alfonso sponsored the School of Translators in Toledo. "The king's work consisted of selecting both the translators and the works to be translated," explains the book *La Escuela de Traductores de Toledo* (The School of Translators in Toledo). "He revised the translations, encouraged intellectual debate, and sponsored the composition of new works."

The Toledo scholars began by translating a large quantity of Arabic works. Muslim scholars had already translated many of the important works of the Greek, Indian, Persian, and Syrian civilizations into Arabic. The resulting storehouse of knowledge had been useful in the Muslim scholars' continuing development in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, history, and geography. In turn, the school of Toledo sought to

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presumably of cleared land, and four cows for Jonathan. He was a 'cordwainer' or shoemaker. On June 29, 1811 Jonathan James was one of the proprietors who purchased lots in the Groton/Peacham burial ground from Ephriam Wesson., but there is no record of him or any of his family being buried there. His daughter, Mary (James) Low and several of her children and grandchildren are buried in the village cemetery.

Jonathan James was the fifth generation from the immigrant ancestor Edmond born about 1617 in Barton Earles, North Hampton, England. Edmond married Rena and came to America where their children were born in Salem, Essex Co., MA and Newbury, Merrimack Co., NH. Jonathan's ancestry is John (1720-1761), Benjamin (1673-1747), Edmond (1647-1682), and Edmond (1617-?). The GHS family records have 112 people in their family tree.

Three other James families in the GHS family records have not been connected to Jonathan's family tree; Jabez James (1779-1855), John James (1780-?) and John N. James (b. around 1830).

Four other individuals; Daniel B., David, Sally and Priscilla are suspected to be members of Jonathan's family tree, but their connections are unknown.

John N. James married Harriet Felther (or Felcher) and they are the parents of Horace Darius James (1861-1920+). They have 49 descendants listed in the GHS family records. Horace D. James' son Horace Leroy "Hod" James (1887-1958) was the owner and operator of the Farm Machine Exchange in Groton during the 1940's and 50's. It was located in the former Lee Blanchard Store. Later Tunbridge Tables was in this building when it burned, and now Merchant's Bank is located on the site. Horace Darius James' grandson, and namesake, H. Darius James (1924-1998) spearheaded the organization of Groton's Chicken Pie Supper in the 1950's to raise funds for the Groton School, and this tradition has continued as a major part of Groton's Fall Foliage Festival for more than 50 years.

Jabez James (1779-1855) married Sally Prescott and they had 5 children,

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Views of Groton Vermont in 1952 (above), 2001 (right—top) 2004 (right—bottom) and 2006 (below)





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including Jabez G. James (b. about 1820) who married Margaret Gibson about 1870 in Ryegate, VT. Jabez and Margaret had no children but in the 1880 census of Barnet, VT Darius James age 19 was living with the family and listed as "other" under relation to head of the household. It would appear that the John N. James and Jabez James families may be related, but the connection is unknown. Jabez and Sally (Prescott) James have 24 descendants listed in the GHS family records.

John James (b. 1780) married Mehetibal Buzzell and they are the parents of Samuel James (1816-1874). Samuel James owned the building where the Post Office was located during John Buchanan's term as Post Master from 1855-1859. This building burned in the great fire of March 31, 1925 which also took the Coffrin Block (Mr. Glover's Groton p. 239). Samuel married Mary Jane Crown and they had 5 children: Almon (1846-1920+) who married Louisa Hosmer; Alzina (1850-1872) who married Samuel Welch; Nancy (1856-1887) who married Franklin Downs; Charles (1858-1861), and Abby (b. 1865). One source listed

John's birth in Groton, but this seems unlikely. Perhaps he is Jonathan's and Deborah's son who was listed as under 16 in the 1790 census of Groton as he would have been 10 years old at that time. This too seems unlikely however, as Jonathan and Deborah were not married until 1784 and John would have been over the age of 26 at the time of the 1810 census. Some evidence suggests that John James and Jabez James families may be related. Each of them had a granddaughter who married Franklin Downs. Franklin Downs married (1) 19 June 1876 Nancy James granddaughter of John James (1780). Nancy died 7 January 1887 and Franklin married (2) Mary Leighton granddaughter of Jabez James (1779). John and Mehetibal (Buzzell) James have 16 descendants listed in the GHS family records.

Daniel B. James was a lawyer in Groton before the Civil War (Mr. Glover's Groton, p. 233), but he is not listed in any of the Groton censuses. He was born in Newbury 27 August 1816 and married Ann George about 1845 in Topsham, VT.

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He is the son of Levi and Rheumah (Batchelder) James. Levi apparently moved west as he died in Illinois in 1877. No other information was available in the GHS family records about this family.

David James married Susannah Hosmer, daughter of Aaron Hosmer Jr. and Dorothy Darling, on 17 February 1825. No other information about David or his family could be found in the GHS family records, but it is suspected that he might be the son of Jonathan and Deborah (Batchelder) James listed as under 16 years of age in the 1790 census and 16 – 26 in both the 1800 and 1810 censuses.

Sally James born 6 June 1789 in Groton, VT, married Henry Lowe on 19 September 1807 in Groton and is believed to be a daughter of Jonathan and Deborah (Batchelder) James, although her parentage has not been established. A younger daughter of Jonathan and Deborah, Mary Abbie James, married Henry's younger brother Hosea about 1817. After Mary's death in 1836, Hosea married Sally Darling, daughter of Robards and Judith (Gile) Darling and widow of Joseph Morrison,

and the family moved to Minnesota.

Priscilla M. James married in 1888 Jonathan D. Heath b. 1818, son of John B. Heath and Hannah Darling. Jonathan was a clergyman in Ohio and Indiana. He was a grandson of Groton pioneers Jesse Heath and John Darling. Jonathan and Priscilla were married in Indiana. Priscilla was Jonathan's third wife. Her relationship to the James family is unknown, but she does have a connection to Groton through her marriage to Jonathan.

This completes the review of Groton's 8 pioneer families who were enumerated in the first census; Aaron Hosmer, James Abbott, Jonathan James, Edmund Morse, Israel Bailey, and John Darling (including his son, Robards and son-in-law Timothy Townshend) plus Jesse Heath who was in Groton earlier, but left before the census was taken.

Next issue will look at some of the other pioneer families who came and left before the first census was taken in 1790-91.

By 1860 some 42% of Vermont's residents had left its rocky hillsides behind and headed westward. (VT History Society)

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mine this storehouse by translating important Arabic works into Latin and Spanish.

News about the accomplishments of Toledo's scholars spread to other countries. Learned men from universities in northern Europe soon flocked to Toledo. All this played a vital role in the scientific and literary progress of the West. In fact, the effects of this vast translation enterprise had an impact on the development of the Renaissance.

The labors of Toledo's translators allowed doctors to read the medical works of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna, in their *Canon of Medicine* which became the basic medical textbook in Western universities until the 17th century. Astronomers were able to read Ptolemy's works and benefit from Arabic trigonometry and the astronomical tables of Khwarizmi*.

Alfonso wanted those translations to be understood by

people in general and this initiative led to the Spanish language becoming a scientific and literary vehicle. The work that Alfonso started helped change the general view that Latin was the language of culture.

Invention of the printing press and tireless work of 16th century translators carried forward the work that Alfonso and his contemporaries had begun. Although the reign of Alfonso X had its share of wars and rebellions, his quest for knowledge helped make it widely accessible to the people in Spain and the rest of the world.

**Al-Khwarizmi was a renowned Persian mathematician of the ninth century who developed algebra and introduced Indian mathematical concepts, such as the use of Arabic numerals including the concept of a zero and the fundamentals of arithmetic. The word "algorithm" is derived from his name.*

GROTON HISTORY NOTES

Groton bought their first snow plow and used it on the roads in Feb. 1928. It was operated by Herman Williams and Sewell Page. [From Helen Benzie's interview with Hosea N. Welch on Groton History.]

Groton Historical Society Update

The new General Store ad hoc committee held a fund raiser for the historical society Sunday April 22 and GHS Secretary Diane Kreis reported that it was a big success. Baked beans and brown bread were served. The program featured an Ethan Allen impersonator who reenacted the taking of Fort Ticonderoga. He was excellent and then Willem Lange, the author and storyteller, told old Vermont stories.

The historical house was open all afternoon for visitors. It was a wonderful afternoon. In March the fund raiser went towards the library and in May it benefited the Groton beautification committee.

Family memberships that include a spouse or partner will be \$15 and individual membership \$10 in 2008.

Tom Gandin is planning to hold a training session this summer on repairing old gravestones.

Deane Page presided over the June meeting in the absence of Richard Brooks. Plans were made to clean the Historical House this month and look into

getting informational signs to inform the public of "MEETING DAY" and "OPEN HOUSE". Other business included purchasing new folding chairs and a donation to the Blue Mountain Education Fund. Dale Brown read a story about his Grandfather's horse that was enjoyed by everyone.

Our web site editor, Jim Dresser, has moved to Tennessee. Although the position is listed as vacant, he will continue to maintain the site until the position is filled.

Recent correspondence from Betty Westerwelle helped connect family members in the Bailey, Emery and Noyes families. She also included a photo of her Mother with her and her brother when they lived near Rickers Mill in 1936. Family records entered in the GHS genealogy computer file now total 39,235 names.

Correspondence about Groton history and Groton families is always welcome. Don't forget to look at the GHS web page. You can access it from <http://www.grotonvt.com>

Groton Historical Society Newsletter

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First

Class

Postage

