# GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter

Volume 17 Issue 1

Groton, Vermont

05046

Winter 2004

## REVIEW OF GROTON, VERMONT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



This is the ninth in a series of articles on Groton in the twentieth century. The ninth decade – 'the eighties - from 1980 to 1989 is taken from Town Reports, and fading memories. Editor

### TWENTIETH CENTURY GROTON The Ninth Decode

The Ninth Decade

1980—1989

#### **OFFICERS**

President Vice President Vacant
Secretary Diane Kreis
Treasurer Joan Haskell
Web Site Editor James Dresser

A group of college amateur hockey players beat an undefeated Russian team, considered by many to be the best in the world, and go on to win the gold medal for the United States in the 1980 Olympics held at Lake Placid, NY. This "Miracle on Ice" as it was called in the press, set the tone in the 80's for the whole country, including Groton. Brooks, the last player to be cut from the 1960 U.S. Olympic team, that won our first gold medal in hockey, coached the 1980 team with the conviction that if you really want something enough you can do it.

The citizens of Groton achieved many of the goals they worked for in the 80's. The volunteer Fire Department joined with Ryegate,

(Continued on page 2)

#### MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

March through November 10 AM at the Peter Paul House, 253 Scott Hwy. Page 2 GHS Newsletter

(Continued from page 1)

Peacham, Barnet and East Topsham Village to form Mutual Aid District 5. A copy machine was purchased for the Town Clerk's Office in 1981 and by the end of the decade the Selectmen were authorized to purchase a computer system. The Land Books were restored. Sewers empting into streams or onto open ground were replaced with approved septic systems and safe drinking water was assured through testing, to improve health conditions. A "sanitary land fill" replaced the town dump.

A Groton Senior Community Center was organized in 1986. The town clerk recorded 100 deeds of property transfers in 1987 alone, and the Groton Community Improvement Grant assisted 18 residents in rehabilitating their homes. The town purchased the Hartford Oil property and constructed the Veterans Memorial Park. The F.A.S.T. Squad started operations, the Frost Memorial Baseball Field dedicated, a Groton Stamp Club was organized, a Recreation Committee was appointed, and Solid the Management and the Planning commissions began work in 1988.

George McLure resurrected an Alumni Band from some of his earlier students and played concerts throughout the area including the Lilac Festival in Lisbon, NH, the Independence Day Parade in Woodsville and Wells River, and the Fall Foliage Day celebrations in Groton with 7 or 8 concerts in between. Reverend Mark Demers organized a Groton Town Band and played concerts in the new Band Stand at Veterans Memorial Park one year.

The Groton Historical Society paid off their \$11,000 note to the town in 1982. The money was used to publish the town history "Mister Glover's Groton" in 1978,

and 800 copies of the book had been sold at that time. The Society purchased the Moulton property in 1989 with generous donations of \$52,350 from their supporters, and renovated the building to use for meetings and for storing and displaying records and memorabilia of Groton's history.

Groton's Bicentennial – 1789-1989 – was celebrated with special events and exhibits.

The 1980's were a busy time in Groton and saw many changes take place. But not all efforts panned out the way they were planned. The Marrow-Tech project, with a \$225,000 start-up grant, had great expectations to establish a bone marrow bank and regional hospital in town, but it fell through.

Plans to relocate Minard Hill road were disapproved by the residents.

Puffer's Motel closed in 1983 and the east rooms were converted into an apartment. The west rooms were converted into an office for the New England Agency of Modern Woodmen of America Insurance Company by Agency Manager, Harold Puffer. A couple of years later the MWA office moved into the remodeled Laundromat building at the junction of U. S. Highway 302 and State Highway 232. The Laundromat had closed a few years earlier.

Palmer's Red Barn changed hands and was operated by Danny Dunbar for several years as a restaurant and snack bar.

Northeast Log Homes was expanding into a regional and national business under the direction of owner Douglas French.

Gerald Morse, of Groton, was the (Continued on page 4)

#### 1880 GROTON CENSUS TRANSCRIBED

The 1880 census of Groton enumerated by Isaac N. Hall in June of that year recorded 1,014 people living in town. There were 229 families, including a 40-man unit of laborers, presumably living in a logging camp.

Farming was the major occupation 117 farmers, outnumbering the with second place laborers with 110, which included the 40-man logging camp. Other occupations were carpenters; 8 merchants, store keepers and grocers; 5 boot, shoe and harness makers; 5 school teachers: 4 brick and stone masons: 4 blacksmiths; 4 lumbermen; 3 clergymen; 2 2 commercial runners: a sawyers; huckster: peddler: manufacturer: burner (probably making charcoal); station clock cleaner; book agent; Inn agent: keeper; painter; miller; wheelwright; Deputy Sheriff; lawyer; and physician.

Photocopies of the microfilmed census records have been transcribed for the Historical Society and are posted on their web page (see below). The 1880 census is now available along with the 1930, 1920, 1910, and 1900 censuses. An 1890 Directory of Groton is also posted as a substitute for the 1890 census records that were destroyed by a fire in the 1920's. The first U. S. Census in 1790 and the 1800 and 1810 census indices are also posted on the Historical Society Web Page.

Photo copies of the microfilm records for the 1870, 1860, 1850, 1840, 1830 and 1820 censuses have been obtained and will be transcribed in the future for the Groton Historical Society. Then the Society will have available all the censuses of Groton from 1790 to 1930 (the last census released to the public) except for 1890, which was lost to fire.

The census records will be used to organize the Family Records in preparation for publication by the Society. Census records will be available for the families without any other family history on file at the Peter Paul House.

.I understand a little better now the effort that Waldo Glover had to exert to collect the family information he did in the 40's, 50's and 60's. Among the papers that my parents had saved (probably to complete when they got around to it) were the forms for family records with a return envelope addressed to Mr. Glover. I wonder how many other forms were never returned. Hope they arrive in time to include them in the publication of Groton Families and relatives. If vou have information that should be included, please send it ASAP to the Historical Society.

#### GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB PAGE

 $http://homepages.together.net/{\sim}jdresser/GrotonHistSoc.html$ 

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Caledonia County Senator until he retired in 1988 after completing 24 years in the State Legislature, eight in the House of Representatives and 16 in the State Senate.

Groton Community Club sponsored the Fall Foliage Festival held annually on the first Saturday in October. The chicken pie supper on Fall Foliage Day, their only fund raiser for the year, was featured in Yankee Magazine in 1985 as "the best chicken pie supper in the world."

The club supported many activities for the people in Groton, including Little League Baseball; the Public Library; swimming program; college scholarships for high school graduates; Vermont Symphony Orchestra Concert; Halloween Party; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Fall Foliage Day parade; flags, flower boxes, and Christmas tree lights for the town; the Groton Volunteer Fire Department; and Tracy Emerson in the 1987 Vermont Miss Teen Pageant.

The Groton Senior Community Center organized in 1986 to serve the 108 people in Groton 60 plus years of age. They met weekly and provided a noon meal at the Community Building for those who could attend and socialize with the group. Meals were delivered to homebound seniors on request. The Board of Directors was chaired by Edward W. Arnold and a crew of 7 to 10 volunteers prepared and served the meals.

The Groton-Ryegate F.A.S.T. Squad began operations in 1987 from the Groton Fire Station with 17 members including 14 active responders from the two towns. They were licensed as a First Responder Service by the Emergency Medical Services Div. of the VT Dept of Health. The first year they responded to 14 calls including ten in Groton. In 1988, their first

full year of operation, they responded to 25 calls with 20 in Groton. New members from Ryegate were added in 1989 and an equipment van was located at the Ryegate Four Corners Fire Station for responding to Ryegate calls. Members totaled 22 including 3 EMT's, 1 RN, 1 LPN, 1 Respiratory Therapist, and 4 members enrolled in an EMT course. The number of F.A.S.T. Squad calls increased to 70 in 1989.

Reverend Mark Demers was the Methodist Minister all decade. The Baptist Church was served by Rev. Fred Middaugh (1980), Rev. Robert Hallas (1981), Rev. Chickering (1986), and Rev. Gareth Tobin (1989).

Deane Page was Postmaster all decade. The Bradford National Bank opened a branch office in Groton on the site where Lee Blanchard's store had been located.

MWA honored Alice Lord Goodine for more than fifty years of community service in Groton, at a recognition dinner program in 1988. She was cited for her work with youth in Epworth League, teaching public school, Church activities, Groton Historical Society, and work on the town history – Mr. Glover's Groton.

James Comley was treasurer of the Groton Historical Society until 1988 when Raymond Page was elected. Other officers of the society were Alice L. Goodine President, and Norma A. Hosmer Vice President. M. Ross McLeod began publishing a newsletter for

(Continued from page 4) the society in 1988.

Groton's first woman fire fighter joined the volunteer fire department in 1980. The fire at White's Store, erroneously reported last decade, occurred in 1980. Fire Chiefs were Wayne Knott (1980), Gordon Page (1982), James Downing (1983-88), and Philip Palmer (1989).

The 1980 Grand List valued property in Groton at \$6, 498,817.00 and by the end of the decade it had increased to \$27,599,048.00. This 325% increase was the result of many changes, including an influx of new owners, increased investments, a reappraisal, and inflation.

The Selectmen were authorized to spend up to \$8,500.00 to purchase a computer and related equipment for the town office.

White's Store operated by Larry Hamlett became Groton General Store in the early 80's taken over by Dick and Wanda Peters. From the time that John Darling had the store through the tenure of John K. White, his son P.T. White, and Larry Hamlett it had been a place for the town's people to gather and exchange stories (sometimes called gossip). The tradition continued under the Peters, and Dick himself became known for his humorous comments to his customers. One lady inquired about the center of town and Dick, peering over the counter toward the floor, said "If you step over a couple of feet to your left, you'll be Another time, a gentleman there." found an item he was looking for but it had three price tags. Dick's explanation for the three prices was the lowest price is for locals, the middle price for other Vermonters, and the highest price is for out-of-staters. The man said, "Well, I'm from Montpelier." And Dick replied, "You pay the middle price then." He was happy he didn't have to pay the high price and left with the goods.

Groton Historical Society purchased the Peter Paul House from Rynold Moulton for \$35,000 in 1989 and renovated it for their headquarters and a place to store and exhibit memorabilia of Groton's history. It was open to the public for the first time on Fall Foliage Day and guided tours were provided to more than 100 visitors.

Veterans Memorial Park was completed in 1988. The town acquired the Hartford Oil property and removed the Arco Garage for the development of the Town Park and construction of a Gazebo (Bandstand). The park contained shrub and tree plantings, horseshoe pits, basketball court, picnic tables and benches, barbeque stands, and trash receptacles. The parking lot, trails and basketball court were paved. Park Agent, Mike Blair, was honored in the 1988 Town Report for his untiring efforts on behalf of the town during his thirteen and a half years as Selectman, which culminated with completion of the town park, due mainly to his vision and labor.

There were 79 births, 87 marriages, and 69 deaths recorded by the Town Clerk in the 1980's. And 161 to 193 dogs were licensed each year of the decade.

#### TOWN OFFICERS

The annual Town Meeting was held each year on the first Tuesday in March to elect a moderator and all necessary Town Officers (see table on (Continued on page 8)

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#### SOME GROTON SCENES IN THE EIGHTIES



Chicken pie cooks at the 1985 supper were featured in Yankee Magazine. (L to R) Joan Haskell, Dorothy Knott, Chairman Red French, Lois Welch, and Bing Page.



Helen Benzie, Alice Goodine. and Norma Hosmer dressed in 1840 era attire were hostesses at the Historical Society Open House on Fall Foliage Day in 1989. 150 year-old Peter Paul House was purchased with donations and renovated for use by the Society to hold their meetings and to store and display Groton's historical collections.



White's Store suffered fire damage in the early 1980's, especially to the living quarters over the store.



Guy & Lillian Darling (above) serving squash at the chicken pie supper and Bill Palmer & Butch Gandin (below) at firemen's auction on Fall Foliage Day



Veterans Memorial Park in 1988





1984 Fall Foliage Day Parade in Groton



Cub Scouts riding on Groton's new Fire Truck in the 1984 parade

(Continued from page 5)

pages 10 and 11) Meetings were held at the Fire Hall until 1989 when they moved into the Community Building. Baby sitting services were provided for preschool children each year beginning in 1986 by the MWA Teen Club.

Town Clerk, Ida Dennis, wrote in 1981 that she "...has served continuously for the last twenty five years - the longest any town clerk had served the town of Groton to date. Many changes have occurred during this period since 1957 when the Town Office was located in the basement of the old Post Office building. 'Hi Goodwin' was operating the pool room upstairs over the clerk's office. There were no conveniences or plumbing. The heat (when there was heat) was from a pot belly stove using coal or wood. Today we [are located in the Community Building and] have a modest but very pleasant, comfortable and efficient town office." Ida continued to serve until she retired when her term expired in 1990 completing 33 years as Groton Town Clerk. On March 15, 1889 she was honored during Town Meeting with a granite plaque for her many years of service.

A Recreation Committee was formed at the 1988 Town Meeting and the following members were elected in 1989: Kenneth Darling, Kelly Bogie, John Darling, Pat Randall, Blenda Lakin, Walter Ed Norton, and Debbie Tinkham.

Also in 1989 a Cemetery Commission of Steven Hart, Deborah Jurist, and Brent Smith was elected. Earlier Town Reports included a report of perpetual care funds used to maintain the cemeteries, and caretakers were apparently hired by the Selectmen.

Besides the Town's Elected

Officials, the town was served by a number of Boards, Commissions and Committees: Zoning, Volunteer Fire Department, Northeast Vermont Development Association, Historical Society, Energy, Health, Community Club, Boy Scouts, Groton Community Center, Inc., F.A.S.T. Squad, Solid Waste, and Planning.

Outside groups serving Groton in the 1980's, and seeking support from the town, included: Caledonia Home Health, Cottage Hospital, Northeast Kingdom Mental Health, Adult Learning Center, Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern Vermont, Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium, Northeast Kingdom Youth Services, Maple Leaf Farm Association, Inc., and Vermont Center for Independent Living.

The Board of Civil Authority was listed in the 1984 Town Report consisting of: the Selectmen – John Darling, Fred Braman, and Michael Blair; the Justices of the Peace – Elizabeth Smith, Raymond Page, Allen Gandin, James Comley, and Tirone Dyer; and the Town Clerk – Ida Dennis.

The town clerk appointed an assistant, Sadie Bruleigh (the Town Treasurer) and the treasurer appointed assistants Betty Morse, a former town treasurer, and Ida Dennis. Elizabeth "Peggy" Smith was appointed as a second assistant town clerk in 1985, and Ross McLeod was appointed as the second assistant treasurer in 1986 replacing Betty Morse. In 1987 Patricia Bouley replaced Ross McLeod as assistant town treasurer.

The Board of Civil Authority (Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

changed in 1988 when Robert Bruleigh and Mary Grant replaced John Darling and Michael Blair as Selectmen, and Howard Hill replaced James Comlev as a Justice of the Peace. The Board of Selectmen also appointed Shirley Beamis as Secretary in 1988 and Jeanne Partington in 1989. Also in 1989 James Comley returned to the Board replacing Howard Hill. Elizabeth "Peggy" Smith was again appointed Assistant Town Clerk, and Patricia Bouley and Roberta Dana were appointed Assistant Town Treasurers.

William Palmer was appointed to the office of Northeast Kingdom Community Action in 1989.

The Pound Keeper's title was changed to Dog Catcher and then Animal Control Officer during the decade. Chet Rodgers was appointed to position in 1989. Other appointments were William Randall. Health Officer; Martha Montague, Deputy Health Officer; Philip Palmer, Fire Chief; James Downing, Fire Warden; Wayne Knott, Civil Defense Chairman; Ida Dennis, Service Officer; Richard Montague, Energy Coordinator; and Mary Grant, NVDA Representative.

Fence Viewers were Ronald Peterson, Kenneth Murray, and Charles Frost; Inspectors of Lumber, Shingles, & Wood were Fred Dana and Leslie Bixby; the Solid Waste Management Commissioners were Brent Smith, Roy Davis, and Mary Grant; and Planning Commissioners were Shirley Beamis (resigned), Signa Braman (resigned), Mary Grant, Marilyn Ruiter (resigned), Deane Page, Terry Dana, Ross McLeod (resigned), and Tim Daley.

The State owned about 40% of Groton and paid \$54,730.78 in lieu of

taxes in 1980 and approximately the same amount each year of the decade. Other funds received from the State in 1989 totaled \$65,675.87 and were identified for highway, lease land, right-of-way, forest fires, Grand List copies, local traffic fines, flood damage, and land use tax.

The 700 properties on the Grand List in 1989 were 37% residential (35% of the value), 30% vacation (33% of the value), 13% farm or woodland (15% of the value), 5% commercial, industrial or utilities (8% of the value), and the miscellaneous category was 14% (7% of the value).

There were only four farm properties listed in 1989. Groton changing from a farming community of 100 years ago when 43% of the occupations listed in the 1880 census were farmers and 40% were laborers. many of which were farm laborers (see In the 1980's, vacation page 3). property was second only to residential, and it almost equaled it in value. Groton was a vacation town where people didn't just come to visit, but invested in vacation property, much of it on Lake Groton, and they came to stay a spell.



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ELECTED TOWN OFFICIALS IN THE EIGHTIES											
Office	Name	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
Moderator	Richard Montaque	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Town Clerk	Ida Dennis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Treasurer	Betty Morse	X	X	X	X						
	Sadie Bruleigh					X	X	X	X		
	Christine Stock									X	X
Selectmen	Michael Blair	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	<b>x</b> *	
	Mary Grant	X	X	X	X						
	Austin Welch	$x^*$									
	Ken Eastman	X									
	Fred Braman		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	John Darling					X	X	X	X		
	Kevin Ricker									X	X
Listers	Stanley Hart	X	X	<b>x</b> *							
	Lynn Bandy	X									
	Elizabeth Smith	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		<b>x</b> *
	Wayne Knott		X	X	X						
	Edward Arnold				X	X					
	Peter Welch					X	X	X			
	Diane Boardman						X				
	Don Crum							X	X	X	
	Wayne Dyer								X	X	X
	Deborah Orelup									X	
	John Patterson										X
Road Com	n. Leverett Welch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Auditors	Betty Dolson	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
	James Comley	X	X	X	X	X	X	$x^*$			
	Dolores Hamlett	X	X	X	X						
	Wayne Dyer					X	X	X			
	Patricia Randall							X	X	X	
	Josephine French								X		
	Shirley Beamis								X	X	<b>x</b> *
	Wanda Peters									X	X
	Mary Grant									<b>x</b> *	
	Kelly Wood										X
	Linda Darling										X
BMU Scho	ol Dir. Janet Puffer	X	X								
	Sally Blair	X	<b>x</b> *								
	Carl Zambon	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Gail Davis		<b>x</b> *								
	Linda Emerson		X	X	X						
	Michael Lauzon			X	X	X					

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Elmer Frost x x x x x			X	X	X	X	X					
Raymond Page x x x x x x								X	X	X	X	X
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lote: see text for Cemetery Commission and Recreation Committee elected in 198	Note: see	text for Cemetery Cor	nmi	ssion	and R	lecre	ation	Com	mittee	e elect	ted in	198

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Home of the Groton Historical Society built in 1840 Purchased in 1989 and renovated by the Society for storing and displaying Historical records and artifacts

Groton Historical Society Newsletter J. W. Benzie, Editor P. O. Box 89 Groton, VT 05046-0089

