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# GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

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# GROTON'S PIONEERS

## NOTICE

Don't forget your 2006 dues

The next Newsletter will be mailed only to members in good standing.

Apologies for missing the Fall 2005 Newsletter. *Ed.*

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## OFFICERS

President	Richard Brooks
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Secretary	Diane Kreis
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Web Site Editor	James Dresser
Newsletter Editor	Willard Benzie

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Pioneer families living in Groton at the time of the first census in 1790 were enumerated as:

James Abbott 2-3-1  
Israel Bailey 1-0-3  
John Darling 4-2-5  
Aaron Hosmer 2-1-0  
Jonathan James 1-1-4  
Edmund Morse 2-1-2  
Timothy Townshend 1-0-2  
Robards Darling 2-1-4

The three numerals following each head of the household are number of males 16 years of age and over, males under 16, and females. Two other pioneers living here before the census were Jacob Jenness and Archibald McLaughlin as noted in the proprietors meeting record of 1787, but they had left town before the census. Archibald McLaughlin was enumerated in the Peacham census, but the whereabouts of Jacob Jenness, a relative of Edmund Morse, is unknown. Another pioneer living here before the census and also before the proprietors meeting in 1787

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## MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

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

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was Jesse Heath who came to Groton in 1781 and his first three children, John, Susanna, and Thomas, were born here in 1782, 84, and 85 respectively as reported in the Ryegate History. Jesse Heath's family was enumerated in the Ryegate census of 1790 and in the Groton censuses

of 1800 and 1810. See the related stories in this issue written by Dale Brown, about Jesse's Powder Horn and a brief history of The Heath Family.

Look for stories about the other pioneers in future issues of the Groton Historical Society Newsletter.

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## **Jesse Heath's Powder Horn and its association with Groton, Vermont**

By Dale Brown

The Heath family was very active during the War of Independence. Jesse's father, Zebediah, was with the Green Mountain Boys, under the command of Seth Warner, when they captured Crown Point in New York. He and his son Jesse, age 16, served with the Patriots at Bunker Hill and the Battle of Trenton. They enlisted in the Continental Army for a period of Three years and spent the winter at Valley Forge. In the spring their unit was sent to the Lake Champlain area to prevent General Burgoyne from isolating the New England States from the rest of the Colonies. As a scout,

Zebediah went missing in action during the battle of Hubbardton. After the battle of Bennington and Saratoga, Jesse finished his enlistment at West Point where his unit was to resist General Howe's attempt to join Burgoyne. It was here at West Point that Jesse crafted his special POWDER HORN, which is currently in safe keeping at the Groton Historical Society.

Allen Gandin graciously donated the POWDER HORN to the Groton Historical Society in memory of his wife 'Dolly' (Page) Gandin, a descendant of Jesse Heath. (see The Heath Family article)

## The Heath Family

By Dale Brown

When the Roman Empire conquered England, they brought with them the Catholic religion. In the twelfth century, the Norman name for Heath in northern France was Bruario and became the Anglo-Saxon name Heath when moving to England. During the 1500's the King Henry VIII of England abolished the Catholic Church and established the Church of England. Those who resisted were put to death. Until 1605 the Heaths abided by these rules but changed to join the Puritans who didn't agree with the English interpretation of the Bible. To avoid prosecution, they remained under cover in the town of Nezeing, England to await a ship that would take them to the New World. Four Heath brothers who lived there came to the Boston area around 1632. How the John, William and Isaac families arrived is not known. However, records show that Bartholomew was single at the time and

arrived on the Ship *Lyons*, the same type of ship as the *Mayflower*.

**Bartholomew Heath** and Hannah Moyce, born in England, were married in Newbury, MA, later to live in Haverhill, MA. At that time town allotments were called plantations with a common area for housing and land outside for farming. Since Haverhill was a frontier town adjacent to the Merrimack River, the settlers were subject to French and Indian raids for a period of 75 years. Bartholomew and Hannah had eight children. Only three of the eight lived to become adults. The other five were killed by Indians.

**Josiah Heath Sr.** the third child of Bartholomew and Hannah. was born in 1651. He married Mary Davis from Haverhill in 1671 and they had nine children. During the late 1670's and through the 1700's, Indians

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**GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB PAGE**

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

## CIVIL WAR ERA MEMORABILIA

The DRUM and PARADE DRESS UNIFORM of Captain William V. Peck used by the VERMONT VOLUNTEER MILITIA was donated to the Groton Historical Society for public display by Melvin Benzie from the Benzie family. Captain Peck was the Grandfather of Helen M. (Peck) Benzie, and the Great Grandfather of her children, J. Willard Benzie, Ina M. (Benzie) Boucher Corthell, Melvin C. Benzie, Charlotte J. (Benzie) Fadden, and Janet H. (Benzie) Puffer.

William V. Peck was commissioned Captain on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1862. He recruited Company H, 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Vermont Volunteer Infantry, which was mustered into the United States service at Brattleboro, VT, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 1862. He was given an Honorable Discharge on 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 1863, due to ill health. Captain Peck was born in Wolcott, VT on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 1834. Prior to his enlistment for Civil War duty, he served 10 years in the Lafayette Artillery of the Vermont Volunteer Militia at Calais, VT where he was commis-

sioned 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1860.

The Thirteenth Regiment Vermont Volunteer Infantry with Colonel Francis V. Randall commanding was organized September 24, 1862. It was composed of ten companies recruited from northern VT, and mustered into the U. S. service on October 3, for nine months, with 953 officers and men. It left for Washington D. C. on the 11<sup>th</sup>, arrived on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and went into camp on East Capitol Hill, remaining there until October 30<sup>th</sup>. They crossed Long Bridge and camped one night on Arlington Heights, marching the next day to the heights south of Alexandria, and there, in what became known as "Camp Vermont" they were engaged for a month in camp and picket duty, drills, reviews and in fatigue work on near-by Fort Lyon. On November 26<sup>th</sup>, they marched towards Fairfax C. H. and late in the night bivouacked, then proceeded the next day to Union Mills, where

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would kill the male population and sell the women and children in Canada. One of their children, possibly Judith, was killed in one of these raids. After Hannah's death he married his second wife, Martha Chase.

**Josiah Heath Jr.** was born in 1673 and was married in 1694 to Hannah Sterling from Rowley, MA. It is not known why Josiah died at the age of 48, but at the time he was in the Militia when the colonies were fighting the French and Indian raiding parties. The couple had at least six known children.

**Josiah Heath III** was born in Haverhill, MA in 1701. He married Mary Merrill From Newbury, MA and since they lived near the disputed line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, records are difficult to research because of the resulting confusion. It is known that in 1758, he was with Captain John Higdon when the Green Mountain Boys captured the fort at Crown Point. The dates of their deaths are not established, however it is known that they had at least seven children.

**Zebediah Heath,** Josiah III's third child, was baptized in May, 1731. There is no record of his wife, Lydia, except that she was buried at

Groton, VT in 1815. They had eight children, Jesse being the first. (I should also mention the second child, Daniel, because he purchased land in Ryegate, near the Groton-Ryegate line on present-day Route 302 and became Jesse's neighbor.) At the age of 16, Zebediah was on the muster roll in His Majesties Services, but later became a member of the Green Mountain Boys in the expedition against Crown Point. With his son, Jesse, they enlisted in the Continental Army for three years, and were sent to Valley Forge to train in various units. During this period of the Fall of 1777 and the following Spring, 300 men died of disease and cold weather. In the Spring, the camp was dispersed, and the men assigned for special missions. It appears that Zebediah was a scout. In the book *Saratoga* by McCulloch, it noted that Sergeant Heath was sent on a scouting mission to observe Gen. Burgoyne's advance by land, because the lower end of Lake Champlain had been obstructed by a chain-log barrier. The application for his Revolutionary War pension stated that he was killed in August, 1777 during the

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they remained nearly two weeks, guarding the railroad and maintaining a strong picket line along the Bull Run. Being relieved on December 5<sup>th</sup>, they returned to Camp Vermont where the old routine was resumed. December 12<sup>th</sup> they marched to Fairfax C. H. and encamped in a grove northwest of the village, remaining there five weeks, assisting in holding the fortifications at Centreville and picketing along the Bull Run. December 28<sup>th</sup> they participated in the repulse of Stuart's Raid, at Fairfax C. H., returning to camp the next morning.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January the regiment marched south 12 miles to Wolf Run Shoals, remaining until April 2, when it moved five miles down the Occoquan and established "Camp Carusi". June 13<sup>th</sup> the advance of Hooker's Army began to pass northward and on the 25<sup>th</sup>, after the entire army had marched, the 13<sup>th</sup> moved to join the other regiments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade. They met at Union Mills and proceeded together on the great seven days march to Gettysburg, PA, where they arrived at sunset, July 1, 1863, bearing a loyal part in this famous battle on July 1, 2,

and 3, 1863. July 6<sup>th</sup> they marched in pursuit of the retreating enemy; crossing Catoctin Mountain in Maryland on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup>, and the next day bivouacked near Middletown, where, it's term of service having expired, it was ordered home, and was mustered out July 21, 1863.



Parade Dress Uniform worn by Captain William V. Peck on display at the Groton Historical Society.



Above: Jesse Heath's Powder Horn with the inscription "Jesse Heath West Point 1780" is on display at the Groton Historical Society.

Below: Captain William V. Peck (1834-1910) Civil War Veteran 1862-1863 and the drum used by the Vermont Volunteer Militia in the Civil War. The drum is on display at the Groton Historical Society.



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Battle of Hubbardton. His wife Lydia eventually moved to Groton to live with her son Jesse.

**Jesse Heath** was born in Plaistow NH. which was a part of Haverhill, MA prior to the border change. He married Phebe Straw from Sandown, NH in 1781, after his return from the service at West Point

With his new bride Jesse set out to find land for a homestead. From Plaistow, they proceeded up the Merrimack, Pemigewasset and Baker Rivers to a portage that took them to the Oliverion. This river flowed into the Connecticut at Haverhill, NH and with no vacant land available in the area, they proceeded up the Connecticut River to the Wells River and into Vermont Territory. There the couple followed an Indian Trail , known as the Gloucester County Road, which was built by the English. At the high point of land, near a water source, Jesse and Phebe built their log cabin on a lot near present-day Glover Road. <sup>1</sup>

Three children were born to Jesse and Phebe in the Groton Territory: John in 1782, Sarah in 1784 and Thomas in 1785. Around 1786, as Groton was being chartered, the Heaths left their homestead and purchased one hundred

acres of land from Governor Chittenden, who owned one share of the Scotch Ryegate Company, and moved to the southwest corner of Ryegate with their family. This 100 acres had an unusual history because the authorities of Ryegate sold this property, with others, to pay a mortgage that had been in existence for 15 years. When the original settlers of Ryegate realized that they needed a grist mill in 1775, Whitelaw, acting for the Scotch Company of Ryegate, exceeded his authority and purchased the Boltonville Falls in Newbury. He borrowed money for this property from a Mr. Little. After 15 years the town fathers, in exchange for the debt, gave lots 330 to 400, the southwestern portion of the town and every lot south of the Wells River, to Little. In 1790 Mr. Little sold this land to a speculator, John Jones of Boston. John Cameron, whose wife was the daughter of Molly Pitcher, purchased the southwestern section of Ryegate in 1793. Since town officials sold property that wasn't theirs, Cameron was given three town lots in Ryegate Corner in exchange for Jesse's property, Lot 387.

The length of time that Jesse lived there is not

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established as there has been no document found that indicates when Jesse sold his Ryegate property. Records show that John Cameron purchased some of his flat land in 1802. And for some reason, in April of 1832, Ebenezer Chadwick, trustee for the John Jones Estate, deeded Lot 387 to William Blair. The lot was then sold to John Miller and subsequently, Bradley Morrison purchased the farm from Miller in 1840. It should be noted that Bradley Morrison purchased the Groton Cemetery from the Estate of Samuel Clark and enlarged the burial grounds to its present size. The Town History of Ryegate states that five of Heath's 15 children were born in Groton and the rest in Ryegate. In Jesse's town records it is noted that four children were born in Ryegate and after 1795, the remaining were born in Groton. This is of no help because the bedroom of his Ryegate farm was in Groton. Jesse's daughter Betsey, born in 1800, married her next door neighbor Robert Brown from Ryegate in 1818. In my opinion it may have been a two-family home.

In 1803, Jesse must have declared his residency in Groton for in this period from 1803 to 1813, he held the offices of

Town Clerk, Lister, Selectman, School Superintendent and Justice of the Peace, and Captain of the Militia.

Jesse purchased his original homestead at a Sheriff's sale. When the Vermont Legislature voted a three cent tax per acre to build roads connecting all county seats, many charter members with lots in Groton failed to pay that tax and the land was listed for tax sale in October 1800. Jesse purchased his original Lot 20, Lot 11, Lot 7, and possibly more. He built his new framed home in 1807 on Lot 20 and his original log cabin became the first school house and a meeting room until 1813. Moulton, Jesse's fifth son, bought Jesse's Groton farm in 1810 and operated a blacksmith shop on the property near the Gray's Cemetery.<sup>2</sup> The original farm buildings burned in 1901.

Jesse Heath spent his final years in Ryegate. When he applied for a military pension in 1820, he was living there. Eventually he did obtain a five dollar a month pension, but only a total of \$131.00 was received prior to his death 19 years later in April, 1839. During those times, it was customary that elderly parents would spend their remaining days with families of sons or

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daughters. Sally, Jesse's second daughter, married John O. Page and they were residents of Ryegate. It is the opinion of those contacted, that Jesse may have spent his final days with the Page family and gave the POWDER HORN to his daughter Sally. Since then, it may have been handed down to their son William and then to William's son Edward (Ed) Page. It is known that Ed Page gave the Powder Horn to his first born Leslie (Les) Page. Les married Elizabeth Hart and they had one child, Geraldine. Referred to all her life as Dolly, she married Allen Gandin and after her death, Allen graciously donated the POWDER HORN to the Groton Historical Society in her memory.

### **Jesse Heath's Children**

Jesse had a family of 15 children. Some of them remained in the Groton-Ryegate area and have been associated with the first families of the town:

**John Heath**, Jesse's first child, was born in 1782. He served in the War of 1812 during the border line conflict between Canada and the United States. He married Hannah Darling in 1804. John served as Selectman, Justice of the Peace and County Judge. He purchased several lots of land in the survey of the second division and lived in West Groton. (Worthy of note: John's wife

Hannah was the sister of Sam Darling. Sam married Catherine Welch and they are accountable for 50 pages of the Welch Genealogy.)

Between 1825 and 1850 there was a land rush to buy properties in the west. and around 1835, John and Hannah moved to Ohio. Three years later he was selling land about 40 miles northwest of Columbus Ohio to Vermonters from the Groton-Ryegate area. He and his wife Hannah were buried in East Liberty, Ohio. They had 32 sons and grandsons serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. It appears that at least one family of Heaths of each generation. beginning with John's, moved further north and west to Indiana, North Dakota, Alberta and British Columbia. Seven generations later, Lawrence Heath of Vancouver B.C., became interested in genealogy, sold his business and pursued the history of his family. After two years of research his book, *Our Family Legacy*, was published in 1991 and a large portion of Jesse Heath's life history was taken from this Genealogy.

**Tom Heath** the

third child born in the Groton territory, enlisted during the war of 1812 and was slain by the enemy in 1815.

**James Heath** born in 1789 and married Nancy Taisey, the sister of George Taisey. George helped his father build the stone house on the Great Road in Groton and made the brick to build his brick home on present-day Route 302.<sup>3</sup>

**Jesse Heath Jr.** married Mehitabel Paul, whose brother Peter Paul built, a house in 1832 that now serves as the *Groton Historical Society House*, and is currently the oldest house in Groton.

**Moses Heath**, the fourth child, was also in the War of 1812. Upon the death of his first wife, Betsy, he established the Heath Cemetery on his land near the intersection of the Old and New County Roads.<sup>4</sup> This area was reserved when he sold the property to Joseph Ricker, the founder of Ricker's Mill. After his second marriage to Sally Chase, they moved to Barton. They died in Barton and their bodies were interred at the Heath Cemetery. It should be mentioned that Albert Cady maintained this burial lot for years and he in turn was buried there.

### **Author's Notes:**

1. Jesse's daughter Betsey Heath had a great grandson who lived in Groton. He built a store in the village and his business survived the Great Depression to exist for 40 years. The store front had a sign that read *B. L. Brown Meat and Groceries*. This was my father's store. The building currently houses a small restaurant named *Brown's Market Bistro*.

2. When Sam Clark purchased a farm from Ira Low in 1837, he set aside a portion of the land for the Groton Village Cemetery. There is a record that Jesse Heath surveyed and laid out the plots for the first section. The date of this statement is in question; however, Clark's second wife, Martha Heath, may have involved Jesse in this assignment. There is reason to believe that Jesse did perform this assignment and was awarded Lot # 4 for his effort. Jesse Heath died on April 27, 1839 and was the first to be buried in the Groton Village Cemetery.

### **Acknowledgements:**

The information in this brief history was taken from Lawrence Heath's *Our Family Legacy*; *Mr. Glover's Groton*; *History of the Groton Village Cemetery*; *Indian Trails* by

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*(Continued from page 11)*

Hosea Welch; *Descendants of Edmund and Jonathan Welch Genealogy* ; Groton and Ryegate Land Records; *The History of Ryegate*; Vital Statistics Records and the Vermont Historical Society.

**Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> The site of Jesse's house was west of what is now called Glover Road, approximately 1.1 miles North of Route 302.

<sup>2</sup> Gray's Cemetery is located near the intersection of present-day Pound and Glover Roads.

<sup>3</sup> This house is located on the North side of William Scott Memorial Highway (Route 302) approximately two-tenths of a mile West of the Groton-Ryegate town line. A period painting of the house is on display in the Groton Historical Society house.

<sup>4</sup> The Heath Cemetery is located near the intersection of present-day Goodfellow and Red Brook Roads.

Groton Historical Society Newsletter  
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Return mailing label with any corrections and your 2006 dues of \$5 to the Groton Historical Society at P. O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046.