
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume 23 Issue 1

Groton, Vermont 05046

Winter 2010

1880 GROTON CENSUS - POPULATION INCREASED 25%



Governor Proctor 1878-80

One hundred years after Groton was granted to Thomas Butterfield and others in 1780, the town was booming. The population increased by 205 in the last decade, with 1,014 people living here in 1880. Almost 60 % were newcomers, listed for the first time in the Groton census (599 including 247 children less than 10 years of age). The early settlers were gone, but their descendants and newcomers were making Groton a thriving community. The exodus that began before the Civil War wasn't over, but it was more than offset by those

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ELECTED OFFICERS

2010

President Richard Brooks
Vice President Deane Page
Secretary Josephine French
Treasurer Joan Haskell

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Web Site Editor Donald Smith
Newsletter Editor J. Willard Benzie

MEETING SCHEDULE

10 AM the second Tuesday
in May through October
at the Peter Paul House,
1203 Scott Hwy.
Groton, VT 05046

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attracted to the new prosperity in town.

Groton was a 'depot' town on the Wells River & Montpelier railroad making it a shipping center for farm, forest and manufactured products. Rail connections improved when the Wells River Toll Bridge was repaired and strengthened in 1876 by adding new arches (see photo on page 9). The influence of 'city life' greatly increased and was extended to rural areas by the railroads.

Groton was a major lumber producing town in 1880. Mills of Amaziah H. Ricker, Isaac M. Ricker, and Hosea N. Welch Jr. expanded and new mills by Jonathan R. Darling, Thomas B. Hall, William Goodwin, Peter Welch, R. M. Harvey, I. N. H. Darling, R. E. Peabody, G. W. Richardson, and others sprang up to supply the demand of the growing economy.

Other forest products included hemlock bark for tanning leather; bobbins for the woolen mills; charcoal for blacksmiths; and firewood for homes, businesses and the railroad.

The village inn operated by Aaron Welch took on new life as

the "Railroad House" and in the 90's it became Weeds Hotel. At Ricker's Pond, Levi H. Page operated the Lake House built by McLane Marshall. Daniel Coffrin raised the old 'Low Store' to make room for the Coffrin Block. John Buchanan had a prosperous mercantile business that he sold to Hall & Cochrane in 1882. Other merchants included S. P. Welch, J. R. Darling, and H. N. Welch 2nd.

The influx of new families to work in the lumber mills at Groton Pond, many with children, necessitated organizing a new school district in that area.

Toward the end of the decade quarries opened in the south part of town and stonesheds were built on the north side of the railroad tracks. The granite industry had started. It was the beginning of Groton's most prosperous years since its establishment 100 years earlier.

Chester A. Arthur, a Vermonter born at Fairfield in 1830, was elected vice president of the U. S. in 1880 and became President the next year when

James Garfield was assassinated. The country was suffering from political corruption, which Arthur helped alleviate by signing the first comprehensive Civil Service legislation into law.

Redfield Proctor was finishing his term as Governor of Vermont in 1880. Legislative enactments that year empowered women to vote in school districts and in town meetings for school officers, and to hold school offices and the office of town clerk. The power of the people was extended by legislative action increasing the number of state officers to be chosen by freemen elections.

The following heads of households and the number of members shows the families living here in 1880.

1880 CENSUS of GROTON

Head & number in household

E. J. Adams	2
Horace Andrews	6
Gardner Annis	8
Moses Annis	2

John Baldwin	5
Percival Bailey	3
Charles E. Bass	3
G. M. Bigalow	3
John C. Bigalow	4
Joseph Bigalow	4
Lyman Blanchard	4
E. O. Bliss	4
L. A. Bondau	5
Henry Boutwell	4
George E. Bowley	2
J. Bronson	2
George Brown	2
John Brown	4
William Brown	3
John Buchanan	1
Albert Butterfield	3
A. J. Carpenter	9
Allen Carter	7
Alex Cassady	7
John Chapin	3
Albert S. Clark	6
Almon L. Clark	2
B. F. Clark	3
Horace G. Clark	6
Manley Clark	4
William F. Clark	5
George Carpenter	7
Samuel B. Clough	5
Daniel Coffrin	5

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GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB PAGE

Go to the Town's web page on the internet at <http://www.grotonvt.com/>
 Then click on the link to the **Historical Society** in the list of organizations.
 Visit the site and send pictures of Groton people and places to Don Smith.

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H. E. Coffrin	5	George W. Fox	5
Dora H. Corruth	2	C. H. Frizzell	5
George Corruth	3	Aaron Frost	9
John Corruth	2	B. M. Frost	3
Sarah Cory	3	Mary Frost	3
Michael Cronan	2	Moses Frost	7
C. C. Crown	2	Sofrona Frost	2
Orrin Crown	5	Morris T. Gary	4
John Cunningham	6	N. M. Gates	4
Andrew Daniels	7	A. J. Gibson	4
Daniel R. Darling	4	A. M. Gibson	5
I. N. H. Darling	5	F. W. Glover	2
Ira Darling	6	Henry C. Glover	5
J. R. Darling	6	Abner Goodwin	6
John H. Darling	2	Celestia Goodwin	3
Nathan Darling	3	G. W. Goodwin	5
Samuel Darling	2	Samuel D. Goodwin	4
S. F. Dean	8	Thomas Goodwin	5
William Dickson	2	Barney Gray	2
William Dow	2	Isaac N. Hall	3
F. P. Downs	3	Thomas B. Hall	5
John Dunn	2	Nelson Harris	4
Adolph Dussouth	7	John C. Harvey	3
Joseph Eastman	2	Clark Hatch	4
Seth N. Eastman	3	Oscar C. Hatch	3
Henry Eggleston	5	William Haze	2
J. E. Emerson	6	William I. Haze	4
Jeremiah Emery	6	A. M. Heath	7
Mary J. Emery	3	Albro Heath	2
Noah Emery	7	B. F. Heath	8
Obid Emery	4	C. F. Heath	2
Simon Emery	2	James N. Heath	4
Timothy Emery	3	Josiah Heath	3
Timothy Emery Jr.	9	Paul Hill	4
S. B. Fifield	4	E. C. Holmes	7
		Levi Hood	5

Jacob Hooper	5	S. B. Morrison	4
John Hooper	2	Timothy Morrison	2
Samuel Hooper	2	Timothy Morrison	8
E. W. Hopkins	5	William Morrison	4
Mary J. James	4	Azro Nourse	6
Esta Julian	2	Eliza Noyes	1
E. F. Keenan	3	George Olney	4
Eliza A. Keenan	2	Chester Orr	4
H. H. Kennison	7	Harvey H. Orr	5
Oliver Kensington	5	John Orr	4
Thomas Kidder	7	William Orr	5
Edward Kittridge	2	William I. Orr	4
Lucina Kittridge	3	Fred Padfield	2
Fred Larrow	8	Albert Page	7
Calvin Leithead	6	Benjamin Page	4
E. A. Lovell	2	F. M. Page	3
Rufus C. Lund	4	George G. Page	7
Frank Maple	4	Leverett H. Page	5
Josiah Marsh	4	Moses Page	7
Thomas R. McLane	4	William Page	4
Peter McLaughlin	4	Ebenezer Paul	5
John A. McLean	40*	Charles N. Pierce	3
John McMan	10	Solfur Pifa	5
Peter McPherson	4	Frank Pismuck	2
John A. Meader	2	Ebenezer Plummer	8
David Millis	3	Moses Plummer	2
Wesley J. Millis	5	R. S. Plummer	4
Selden Minard	4	William Plummer	5
Isaac Morrill	4	Emerly Randall	2
Abram Morrison	4	Mary J. Randall	2
Charles Morrison	3	J. W. Randall	3
Francis Morrison	1	A. P. Renfrew	6
Frank Morrison	3	Meroa Renfrew	4
John Morrison	3	A. H. Ricker	6
Orrin Morrison	5	Charles A. Ricker	3
		George Ricker	7

*logging camp & mill workers

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Isaac M. Ricker	4	Peter Welch	7
Maribah Ricker	5	Samuel P. Welch	5
Orson Ricker	4	Stephen Welch	4
Richard Rion	1	Timothy Welch	5
Daniel Roberts	5	W. N. Welch	6
John Roberts	2	Warren Welch	8
George Scott	8	William Welch	2
J. A. Sherburn	4	Martin Weld	4
F. P. Smith	4	Nelson Whitcher	3
S. C. Stevens	6	A. P. Whitehill	3
Lavina Stowell	2	James Whitehill	3
G. W. Taisey	4	James B. Whitehill	3
T. H. Taisey	3	James R. Whitehill	4
William Taisey	5	Moses H. Whitehill	3
A. J. Therman	7	Peter Whitehill	4
David Vance	2	Susan Whitehill	4
G. H. Vance	3	William Whitehill	4
Henry Vance	4	Henry D. Willard	5
Norris C. Vance	7	Ephraim R. Willey	4
Victor Voulett	6	Isaac Willson	8
H. L. Waterman	6	Frank Wood	3
Abigail Welch	2	D. Wormwood	3
A. G. Welch	2	Thomas Wormwood	2
Aaron Welch	5	Betsey Wrinkle	2
Ara Welch	3		
C. H. Welch	3		
Carlos Welch	2		
Dolly Welch	1		
E. M. Welch	3		
Hosea Welch Jr.	6		
Hosea Welch 2 nd	4		
Jeremiah P. Welch	4		
John H. Welch	7		
John M. Welch	4		
Lebbeus Welch	4		
Martha Welch	1		

These 236 households with 1014 people included many new immigrants from Canada, Scotland, Italy and elsewhere to work on the farms and in the lumber camps and granite industries of Groton.

WORLD WAR II STORIES—PART ONE

HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

By Dale Brown

Of the ninety nine people in Groton, who served in World War II, this is about the ten men who enlisted in the Vermont National Guard during the fall of 1940.

These ten men, seeing the hand writing on the wall, were Edward (Eddy) Bixby, Ellis Boomhower, Eugene (Gene) Dennis, Kenneth (Ken) Eastman, Harold (Tom) Eastman, Carl Evans, Paul Frost, Fred (Freddy) Hatch, Dwight (Buster) Smith and Stanley (Mutt) Taisey. Five reported to the Service Company of the 172nd Infantry, 86th Brigade, 43rd Division at Montpelier. Others were in the Infantry motor Company at Barre and St. Johnsbury. Four months after enlistment the units were called up for active duty and a year of training. At this time, in February 1941, the National Guard was inducted into the regular Army.

On March 14th, the unit was shipped to Camp Blanding Florida with the rest of the 43rd Division. In all 12,092 officers and men were in the 43rd Division; 2,144 of them were National

Guard members. At Blanding some of the men were shipped to various Motor Transport Schools for three to five months training; such as Fort McGuire in New Jersey and Fort McPherson in Georgia. They had returned to Camp Blanding by the time Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese on December 7, 1941.

The 43rd Division was shipped to Camp Shelby in Mississippi and while there, went on maneuvers in Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina. During maneuvers, Freddy became infected with tuberculosis. He received a medical discharge and died in 1946 at the V. A. Hospital. After maneuvers, the outfit was shipped to Fort Ord in California around the middle of September 1942.

One month later, October 12th, the 172nd aboard the Calvin Coolidge Troup Ship, left San Francisco Bay for the Pacific Theatre. The Calvin Coolidge was a 22,000 ton luxury ship built to sail from San Francisco to the Orient. When she went to

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SOME GROTON BUSINESSMEN IN 1880



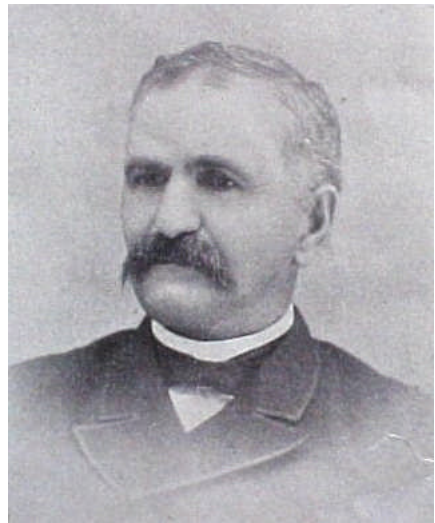
Jonathan R. Darling 1823-1910



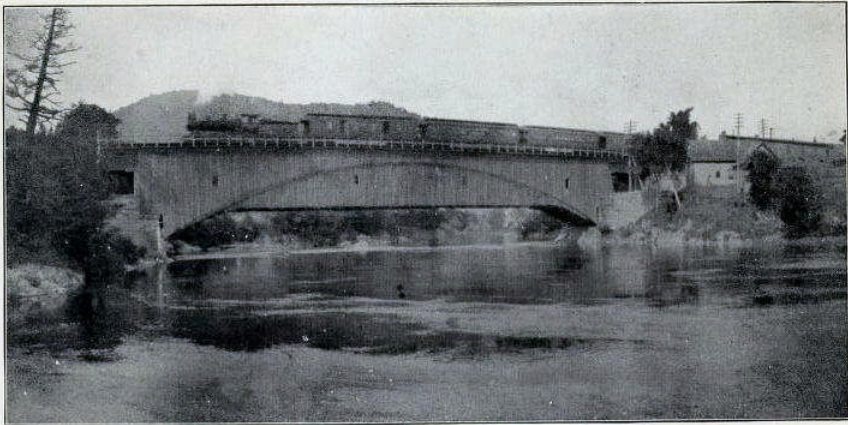
Isaac M. Ricker 1839-1910



Alexander Cochrane 1835—1919



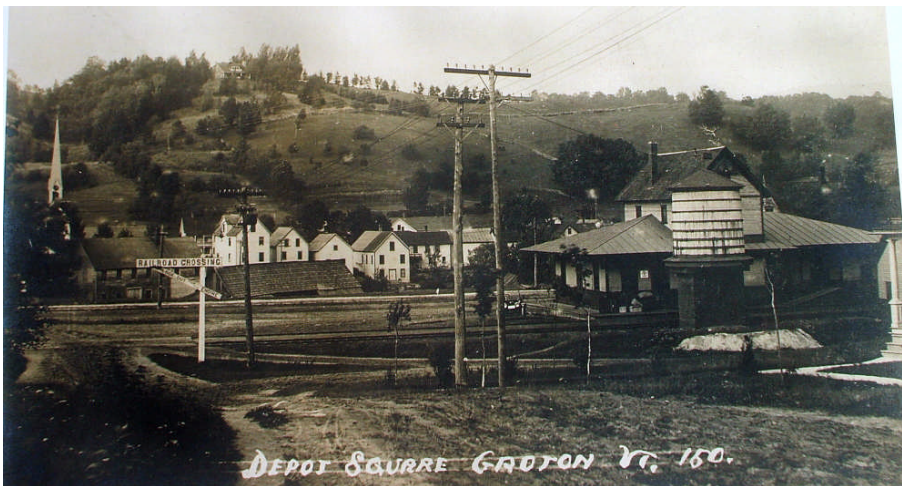
Thomas B. Hall 1834-1918



Bridge in 1884. Air Line Train North.

The Wells River Toll Bridge was repaired and strengthened with new arches in 1876, greatly improving railway connections.

Picture is from the publication *Wells River Bridge and other Haverhill Toll Bridges* by William F. Whitcher 1904.



Groton was a 'depot town' and served as a shipping center for Topsham, Orange, Peacham and other surrounding areas in 1880.

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war as a troop carrier, most of the finery had been ripped out. This trip was her seventh military mission as a troop carrier to the Pacific and it turned out to be her last.

As the Coolidge entered the Espirito Santo harbor in the New Hebrides Islands, at 9:30 in the morning, the ship struck two U. S. mines and sank. It was driven onto the reef near shore but within one hour and 25 minutes, the carrier with all the 172nd Infantry Complex supplies and equipment went down stern first under 135 feet of water.

Fuel tanks had ruptured and oil on the ocean surface covered the men swimming ashore. Some rifles dropped accidentally overboard, caused some casualties, resulting in orders to leave all equipment on board. Others, waiting until last moments, used ropes and landing nets to scramble to life boats and rafts. Of the 5,540 men on board, there were possibly three casualties.

It took months to re-supply the 172nd and during this time they were subject to nuisance air raids from Japanese aircraft. In March they moved out and for two and a half years they fought across the Pacific

on, Guadalcanal, Rendova Island, New Georgia Island, New Guinea, numerous small islands and the Philippines. In the spring of 44, the unit was sent to New Zealand for R & R (rest and relaxation). In the Philippines, some of the 172nd were sent to Japan, but others, who had attained enough points, were sent back from Clark Field to Camp Devens where they were discharged on August 8, 1945.

In the Philippines, a General remarked to adjutant General Reginald Cram* that the 172nd was the best fighting unit he had seen during the war. General Cram was aid-de-camp to General Leonard Wing when the 172nd was activated in February of 1941.

The 43rd Division paid for it's valor for half of them, or more than 6,000 were wounded and 1,561 died.

*General Cram was with me at Norwich University. Dale Brown

Other stories by some of the men, as told to Dale, will be in future issues of the newsletter.
editor

HISTORY WRITTEN IN STONE

A race against time to save history

Tens of thousands of gravestones in New England are crumbling according to a recent article in the Boston Globe by Brian MacQuarrie.

The winged skull carved into the slate above John Paine's final resting place is much more than a morbid curio for Robert Carlson, who stoops to inspect the cracked and crumbling headstone in Orleans Cemetery.

Paine, who died in 1731, is Carlson's ancestor, and the broken, moss-covered marker is more the rule than the exception for tens of thousands of gravestones in New England's old burying grounds.

"These headstones are falling apart," says Carlson, 75, chairman of the Cemetery Commission in neighboring Eastham. "And the rate at which we're losing them is increasing."

Carlson estimates that 1,100 stones, or at least 30 percent of the markers known to have existed before 1800 on Cape Cod, have been lost to neglect, accident, and the ravages of time.

"They're not being taken care of," Carlson says. "And they're getting older and older." The problem is not confined to Cape Cod. With communities across New England buffeted by budget constraints and 21st-century priorities, deteriorating gravestones are a pressing issue throughout one of the oldest regions in the country. But finding the means and will to preserve these remnants of history, preservationists say, is trailing the rate at which nature and vandals are destroying them.

"This is a really serious problem," said Peter Drummey, librarian for the Massachusetts Historical Society. "This should be a deep concern to everyone who has an interest and respect for the past."

The stones are important, Drummey and others said, because of their stone-chiseled records of people, local history, and places that otherwise might

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be lost forever. They also are examples of the earliest New England folk art. And their images of hellfire, bones, and frightening skulls show the weighty effects of an unforgiving life, both inside and outside the meetinghouse pews.

While some communities pay mere lip service to the decaying history within their boundaries, Carlson has tackled the issue with the fervor of a one-man preservation society.

By roaming Barnstable County graveyards and poring over old records in its town halls, Carlson has been able to compile a list of 40,000 headstones erected on Cape Cod before 1880. And by comparing that data with today's on-the-ground evidence, Carlson can chart the history that is disappearing from the Cape's sandy soil.

"I'll never complete what I'm trying to do. But I'd rather do that than play bridge," said Carlson who has a website, www.capecodgravestones.com, to

display his findings.

Carlson, who is authorized to clean gravestones, said his work has been aided by the state's Community Preservation Act, which provides matching funds for cities and towns to spend on historical conservation, among other uses. During the past four years, Carlson said, the town of Eastham has been able to tap \$60,000 for its early graveyards, which contain the remains of three Mayflower passengers and many other early settlers.

The preservation fund, as well as state grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, have helped many communities assess their cemetery needs. But once those needs are determined, finding the money for improvements and regular maintenance is another, daunting battle. The work is labor-intensive and can reach \$400 to \$500 per stone for professional work to remove the lichen, repair the cracks, and reassemble any broken pieces, Carlson said.

“It’s obviously a hard thing to fund something like that,” said Barbara Donohue, an archeological consultant from Newton who has worked on cemetery preservation “It varies from town to town.”

To Mike Trinkley, who directs the nonprofit Chicora Foundation, one of the nation’s leading preservation groups, the recession has given an easy out to municipalities that never had been moved to pay attention to old cemeteries.

“This isn’t a crisis that just occurred simultaneously with the downturn in the economy,” said Trinkley, who is based in Columbia, S.C., and has worked on cemeteries in Truro and Dedham. “The crisis was there even during flush times.”

“It doesn’t have all that much to do with historic preservation as it does with simple human dignity and human respect,” Trinkley said. “These were human beings, they had families, they had loved ones. You owe that grave the same dignity and respect as

someone who was buried yesterday.”

As he walks among the scattered markers in Cove Burying Ground in Eastham, Carlson is drawn to a collection of small stones - rocks, actually - clustered in a corner of the cemetery off Route 6. There Carlson points to a simple fieldstone, into which has been chiseled the name “Benjamin Paine” and “1713,” the year of his death.

The son of John Paine, whose broken stone lies a few miles south in Orleans, Benjamin Paine died at 15 years old, another distant relative whom Carlson has come to know through his grave. And this marker, the oldest inscribed fieldstone on Cape Cod, tells of a demanding existence where slate epitaphs and carvings were neither affordable or available. But to Carlson, this crude stone is a precious thing of remarkable and haunting beauty.

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GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

A new year and a new decade is here. 2010 memberships (\$10 for individuals and \$15 for couples) are due and payable to Groton Historical Society, P. O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046. At least 24 members have already paid and some have paid dues for 2011. The last year of your paid-up dues is shown on the mailing address. Please inform the Society of any errors.

The newsletters can now be read on the GHS website (see page 3 for access instructions). They are in PDF (portable document format) so they can be easily read with Adobe Acrobat Reader or any PDF reader. If you would like to read future newsletters on the GHS website or get a printable copy by e-mail and help save the Society printing and mailing costs, please send your e-mail address to GHS at the above address, or e-mail it to:

jwbenzie@mchsi.com

The best museums of history—through their artifacts and displays—are able to transport us

to another time and place. They are designed to help us better understand the people and events that have shaped different aspects of our history and culture. GHS is working hard toward this goal and needs your help. If you have items or information about events and people that should be preserved for future generations come to a meeting, talk with a member or send it to GHS.

Member Dale Brown has contributed a number of articles for the newsletter, one of which appears on page 7. Others will be in future issues. Everyone is encouraged to submit their stories about people and events, to share with readers of the newsletter.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) has long been a valuable resource for historians. The dedicated women who have been members of this organization have done much to transcribe and preserve records. For more than a century they

have assisted genealogists in proving their descent from those who fought for the American side in the Revolutionary War.

NSDAR is to be commended for the tremendous effort behind providing searchable records of the soldiers and their descendants, and for allowing it to be accessed by the general public for free. As a membership-based organization they did not have to do so. You can find more information about these databases at http://dar.org/library/online_research.cfm

[from the New England Historic Genealogical Society Newsletter]

On November 6th the Vermont Historical Society (VHS) hosted the 56th Annual League of Local Historical Societies Meeting at St. Albans, VT. More than 120 participants enjoyed a day filled with speakers, workshops, tours, awards and networking. Workshop sessions were held on a variety of topics including: Strategic Planning for Lo-

cal Historical Societies, Collection Policies & Procedures: Preventing Pitfalls, Controlling Collections, Oral History in the 21st Century-Why it Matters & How We Can keep the Tradition Alive.

The documentary "Life in Washington County" was produced by Professor Bill Doyle's VT Government and History class at Johnson State College and Vince Franke of Peregrine Productions in Waterbury. Free copies of the film will be sent to all the local schools, historical societies and libraries. DVD copies are \$15 and are available online at:

www.peregrineproductions.com

Each year the VHS recognizes the achievements of local societies and their members. These awards recognize and encourage the efforts of local societies and their members in collecting, preserving and disseminating the history of their communities.

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