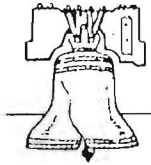


The Groton Historical Society



NEWSLETTER

GROTON, VERMONT

WINTER 1992-1993



YOUR FAMILY TREE

The Groton Historical Society has an on-going project of up-dating the Genealogy of Groton families. We have quite a large file on hand but are anxious to have it brought up to date, especially information on the past several generations. Please send any information you have on your "Family Tree", so that it can be included in our records.

Also, you are invited to come and examine the records that may be in the files concerning your old family ties. Contact Alice Goodine about this (584 - 3314).

* * * * *



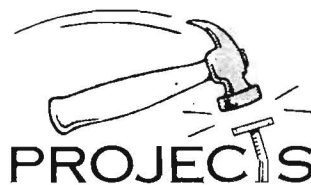
Society dues are now due. Dues for 1993 will still be \$2.00 per year.

At a recent meeting it was voted that they be increased to \$5.00 per year starting in 1994.

All interested people are invited to join the Society. Meetings are

held on the second Tuesday of each month at 9:00 A.M., usually at the Historic House on Main Street.

* * * * *



As soon as the weather permits renovation work will begin again on the House. Plans now include fixing up the two upstairs rooms and work on the fireplace in the basement. People with time and talent will surely be welcomed when these projects start.

* * * * *



TYPES OF FENCES

(Excerpts from "Mr. Glover's Groton")

The subject of herds and flocks suggests mention of the various types of fencing used through the years. As already indicated in the case of hogs, there was much free roaming of domestic animals in pioneer days. The first crude barrier in common use in that early day was the "brush fence", made by partly cutting off small trees two or three feet from the ground and felling them so that the bodies would still be attached to the stump. A series of such trees felled in line, would make the foundation of a barrier, and - as they would be still living from their slight connection with their stumps - would throw out branches, and thus keep this part of the fence alive. Upon this foundation other small trees and brush would be thrown and interwoven.

A second primitive fence was made of stakes, poles and branches. In lieu of fence posts, stakes were driven into the ground in pairs to form the letter X and made fast at the intersection by twining and tying or locking a green pliable twig called a "withe". A strong pole was then laid from one X to another, thus making a fence one pole high. If a higher fence was required, as was generally the case, a second X was made of taller stakes, and with a higher intersection, and a second pole was laid on this. Upon this foundation, extra poles and brush could be piled as reenforcement.

Probably the next type of fencing was the stone wall, the only permanent type. Walls were not generally built until some years after the land was cleared of stumps. It was slow, hard work, to be

done in a time of otherwise comparative leisure. In clearing a field, rocks both large and small were thrown into convenient piles located here and there over the field. There was no modern sophisticated farm machinery requiring a smooth, unencumbered stretch of land so these stone piles could be mown, raked and even plowed around without much difficulty. When at last there were times of leisure, generally "between seasons", out came the dray, the dump cart and the yoke of oxen, and the stone piles were removed to places where proposed walls were to rise. Today there is hardly a farm which does not have long stretches of this permanent fencing, and some of the very best construction is still to be seen on now-abandoned farms enveloped in forest.

A modified type was the "Half-wall". In this case a wall was laid about two feet high, into which posts were set. Only two rails were needed to bring it to the required height. An added advantage was that the posts, set among rocks, would dry out after each rain, and thus outlast by many years posts set in the ground.

In none of these fences were nails used, nor were they in the earliest board fences, in which the boards were held in place by a batten through which, as well as through the board and post, an inch and a quarter hole was bored and a cedar pin with an enlarged head was inserted.

After mid-century practically all new fencing was made with post and boards, until the mid-eighties, when barbed wire - invented in 1874 made its first appearance in Groton. From then to the present time barbed wire has been the standard fence material for field and pasture.

* * * * *



A view of part of the audience that attended the "Christmas Open House" at the Historic House on December 8, 1992. The house was decorated for the Christmas Season and the visitors enjoyed a concert of organ music by Bruce Stevens, who played the recently restored old pump organ which was donated to the Groton Historical Society by Mr. & Mrs. Rufus Hosmer.

A good crowd was on hand to listen to the music and join in the singing of Christmas Carols. Refreshments were served after the program.

* * * * *

STATE OF VERMONT.....A "MELTING POT"

From the admission of Vermont to the Union in 1791 until the outbreak of the War of 1812, Vermont's population grew from 85,000 to over 220,000. The majority of these first settlers were from southern New England and were of English descent. Since then immigrants from many countries have come to settle in Vermont:

ITALIANS: 1882 - 1906; settled in Barre, Proctor, White River, Rutland, Burlington, Montpelier. Occupations: marble and granite cutters, railroad workers.

SCOTTISH: 1770-1880: settled in Ryegate, Caledonia County, Barre. Occupations: farmers, granite cutters.

FRENCH CANADIANS: 1775-1781, 1850-1925. Settled in Swanton, St. Albans, Winooski, Burlington, Rutland, St. Johnsbury. Occupations: marble workers, textile workers, lumberjacks.

WELSH: 1850-1910. Settled in Poultney, Castleton, Fair Haven, Pawlet. Occupations: slate quarrymen.

POLISH: 1880-1913. Settled in Springfield, Rutland. Occupations: mill workers, machine shop workers, marble workers.

RUSSIANS: 1890-1913. Settled in Springfield. Occupations: machine shop workers, mill workers.