
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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PROHIBITION 1919—1933



Dumping illegal alcohol in 1929

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One hundred years ago, in January 1919, three fourths of the states had ratified the 18th amendment to the U. S. Constitution prohibiting the sale and use of alcoholic beverages. And by mid-year Congress passed legislation to enforce the amendment.

Activists to regulate the sale and imbibing of alcoholic beverages had been organizing since the Revolutionary War and several states had passed laws to that effect in the early 1800's. Although some churches had parishioners pledge abstinence before the Civil War, most temperance organizations were seeking to control drinking by influencing drinkers to be more temperate.

After the Civil War the temperance movement gained momentum and the emphasis shifted toward prohibition. The National Prohibition Party was formed in 1869 and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in

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1873, These efforts contributed to many towns, counties, and some states voting to go dry.

When the WCTU diluted its prohibition efforts by emphasizing women suffrage and the Prohibition Party added other planks to its anti-liquor platform, the Anti-Saloon League (ASL), which was formed in 1893, became the leading advocacy group for prohibition.

The ASL concentrated on state governments to elect candidates who supported prohibition. But In 1913 when the 16th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified and a National Income Tax law was passed, lessening the need for revenue from liquor taxes, the ASL shifted emphasis to national prohibition. They were successful in getting Congress to pass a prohibition amendment out of committee the following year, but it failed to get the required two thirds majority.

Recognizing they needed the support of the WCTU to succeed, the ASL helped them get a Constitutional Amendment for women's suffrage passed by congress, which became the 19th Amendment when it was ratified by 36 states in 1920. Another attempt to pass a prohibition amendment in 1917 was successful. Efforts then shifted to getting the required three fourths of the state's legislatures to ratify the 18th Constitutional Amendment.

Congress passed a temporary Wartime Prohibition Act reportedly to save grain for the war effort even though World War I Armistice had already been signed by the time it passed, and public animosity during the war toward German-Americans, who generally opposed prohibition, was still evident, together with the New Income Tax lessening need for the liquor tax provided enough momentum for the state legislatures to ratify the 18th Amendment in January 1919.

Prohibition did not stop drinking of alcoholic beverages, it just made it illegal, except for medicinal purposes. The 1920's were referred to as the 'Roaring Twenties' partly because of 'Speakeasy' parties where bootleggers smuggled illegal alcoholic

beverages making enormous profits from their customers. Not only avoiding taxes on the illegal liquor, they didn't pay the new Federal Income Tax, which led to the demise of Al Capone, one of the most notorious gangsters during prohibition.

The stock market crash of 1929 marked the end of good times and the Great Depression of the 1930's dominated American culture until the U. S. entered World War II on December 7, 1941.

The depression increased the need for more revenue to help the destitute and prohibition was losing support, so the 21st Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was easily passed and ratified in 1933 to repeal the 18th Amendment and turn control of alcoholic beverages back to the states.

The states then gained more revenue by issuing liquor licenses and the Federal government taxed the sale of alcoholic beverages to increase their revenues.

Although prohibition was called a noble experiment to improve the health of the nation, it was the prosperity after World War I that allowed it to be enacted one hundred years ago, and the Great Depression that created the need for more revenue to repeal it fourteen years later in 1933.

After prohibition was repealed, Groton voted dry for many years. The local WCTU chapter was very active in getting out the vote. They also protested drinking of alcoholic beverages at the local dances at the Rock Maple Ballroom held weekly for the boys stationed in the CCC camps at Groton State Forest. Alcohol was not sold nor permitted in the dance hall, but dancers brought it with them and left it in their cars, where they could imbibe on their frequent trips for fresh air and refreshments.

MY DAD

Clarence Douglas Welch 1906 - 1975

By Carol (Welch) Shields

Dad was born 113 years ago. He was just shy of 35 when he married my Mom and 39 by the time I was born, the third of 7 children. He was then working as a Watchman for the B&M Railroad out of the Roundhouse in Woodsville and spent most of his life there, eventually attaining "Dispatcher" status. Only when it closed in the late '50s did he make the long drive from Ryegate to the Bath Fiber Mill. There he worked seven days a week shoveling coal in a windowless basement, into the hungry furnace that heated the plant. He made the nightly drive home, black faced from the coal dust engendered. That job, which kept food on the table for his family of nine also cost him his health and eventually his life.

Dad was a big man, like his father, Jacob, and his granddads, Lebbeus Welch and Timothy Emery and he inherited not only their size but their respect for honesty and hard work. He, as they, loved Groton, loved farming and cherished family. It was Grandma Evalona who took the children to church each Sunday, willingly when they were younger, and unwillingly at some point when Dad decided he'd outgrown that.

Dad was the baby in a family of three children, spaced 5 years apart. Aunt Etta, eldest of the three, described well the difficult home birth and doctor's surprise when the hand scales tipped that big baby boy at 14 pounds. Five-year-old Ellis became his hero and constant companion. It was from Ellis' letters, many written from Burlington Hospital, and secreted away in Dad's big steamer trunk, that we learned details of their happy days on the farm raising myriads of rabbits, ducks, chickens and marketing them, or their eggs, for spending money.

Dad was probably 8 when he was told his big brother, diagnosed with diabetes, could not live long. Ellis did not, barely 15, dying at home in their little bedroom with his Mother, Dad, Etta, Aunt Eliza, and his brokenhearted little brother, now nine, at his bedside. In a few short years, his Mother followed, succumbing to

Bright's Disease. Dad's words were, "When Mother died, the sunshine left our home!"

Dad left home too, at 16, when Grampa remarried and the once 'too quiet' little farmhouse suddenly seemed overcrowded with Annie and her five young children. Staying first with Etta and Bob at their East Ryegate farm, then striking out on his own, still a teenager, Dad began a nomadic life. He stayed the longest in the Poughkeepsie, N.Y. area, hired as a sparring partner for Jack Dempsey and working as a gardener for F.D.R. By 1927 he was in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. working on threshing crews. There were roaming years when even Etta did not know his whereabouts. His struggles with what we suspect now was Bi-polar Disorder kept his family then and ours later riding with him that emotional rollercoaster that was beyond his control.

Was it Grampa's death in the Fall of 1940 that brought him home to stay? He sadly passed up the farm that might have been his by inheritance, opting instead for logging, then railroading, after he and my beautiful Mom were married. They were in their first home on the State Forest Rd. in Groton when I was born. By 1946 we were on Bible Hill in Ryegate, 120 pristine acres, with an enviable 360-degree view. (Gutterson's Hill and Blue Mountain to the north, eastward to our high forested hillside backdropped by Monroe farms and fields, south to N.H. White Mountains and below us on the west, the Nelson Fam and sparkling waters of Ticklenaked pond.) "God's country' we called it then, long before the term was coined by others.

Our old grey-aged uninsulated farmhouse with an attached woodshed, and woodstoves standing central in each room kept Dad busy in the woodlot all summer. His spare time went into our huge gardens which in turn kept Mom with her face to the fire all summer canning, jellying and jamming! Dad's pruning skills kept the Concord's heavy on the vines and the myriads of apples in such supply that he marketed them by the bushel in Wells River. Berrying all season and gardening kept us children happily entertained and productive

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too. Both parents saw to it that no child in their household could cry boredom yet left us with ample hours to roam every inch of that acreage. Forests, streams and logging trails, we knew it like the back of our hands.

Today on Father's Day I weigh my Dad's influence in my life with gratitude. He set the standards in our home high, by word and by example. Hard work, honesty, earning our own way and the importance of a good education were just a few. (He kept a close eye on those report cards, rewarding and scolding as needed.) Lying, shady jokes, sleazy magazines, and inappropriate language were outlawed in our home, ("Darn" was allowed, nothing stronger.) Out of his hearing, Mom only occasionally in times of great frustration, could be heard substituting a different consonant there. Seeing the grip alcohol had on a number of his much-loved uncles was enough to make Dad avoid strong drink: even beer. Ginger water was his beverage of choice on a sultry summer day, a dollop of apple jelly added for taste. .

Dad taught us positivity. "Poor" was a four-letter word. "How could anyone who lived in America, with a roof over their head and food on the table, claim to be poor?" He never complained about taxes. "They are a small price to pay for our freedom, for our kid's education." He had equal impatience with those who spoke disparagingly of the "rich". His stock answer, "Well, they earned it didn't they?" If a relative kindly offered us anything, he'd say, "No thanks, we don't need charity." Sometimes when he refused something we really could have used, Mom would give me a quick wink and whisper, "Could have fooled me,"

Dad taught us to work hard, save our money; even set us up our own saving account at the Wells River Bank. He went in with me the day I proudly deposited that quarter I'd earned from a neighbor. We never got paid for work at home, we were a family, all contributing. He was proud if we did right, to do wrong was to incur his wrath. It was more the disappointed look in his eyes that was my deterrent. His glance in the direction of the razor strap shaped us up immediately. We knew we were loved.

Dad wasn't a church-going man, part of that was his reclusive nature. He believed in God, revered his Bible with his name imprinted, a gift from his parents on his 12th Birthday and never assigned us chores on Sunday, "the Lord's Day". We attended several churches and Christian camps growing up with Dad's approval and encouragement. He respected "religion", it was through televangelists like Billy Graham that Dad heard the Gospel and came to know Christ and finally, as he put it, "had peace he always sought." Much of what I am today I owe to my Dad, I'm grateful he was mine.

Happy Father's Day, Dad, till I see you again!

IN MEMORIAM

Feb 21, 2019 Betty Jean (Brown) Chicoine, age 89

Mar 12, 2019 Gordon Wallace Page, 77

Mar 19, 2019 Warren Keith "Sonny" Bailey, 72

Apr 1, 2019 Louise Minnie (Hart) Darling, 70

Apr 11, 2019 William Edward Palmer, 90

Apr 26, 2019 Albert Gene "Typer" Wilson, 78

May 15, 2019 Jean Elizabeth (Foster) Malnati, 100

May 24, 2019 Betty Jean (Bouley) Webster, 86

PICTURES FROM THE PAST



John 1856-1930 and Mary (Tawse) 1858-1941 Benzie and their children:
Corrine (Benzie) Carpenter 1895-1979 and James Benzie 1893-1975





Standing left J. R. Darling 1826-1910, right Seth Eastman 1843-1913
With other veterans at a late 1800's militia reunion in Groton.



George 1881-1977 and Goldie (Hutchins) 1877-1966 Welch Family
At their 50th Wedding Anniversary in 1954

<—Picture to the left: Person sitting 4th from the left identified as
William. Morrison. Picture taken in late 1800's.

Remembering D-Day

This year is the 75th anniversary of D-Day when Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France on June 6, 1944 to liberate Europe from Hitler's occupying Nazi troops. It was the world's largest amphibious assault in the history of human warfare. It took place on the beaches of Normandy, France to free Western Europe and the World from Nazi aggression. One hundred fifty-six thousand Allied Troops stormed the five beaches of Normandy that day and by June 11th three hundred and twenty-six thousand had crossed the English Channel with more than 100,000 tons of military equipment. More than 12,000 Allied troops were killed, wounded, missing or captured.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander sent the troops with the following message, "Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force, you are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely. But this is the year 1944! The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to victory! I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory! Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking."

Allied troops parachuted into a turbulent night to secure inland positions and establish bases they could protect. Some went in stealthy but dangerous glider planes, known as 'flying coffins' that often splintered to pieces in attempts to land in fields with hedgerows and filled with obstructions called 'Rommel's asparagus.' They delivered weapons, supplies and even jeeps to the paratroopers who had come in ahead of the gliders.

By morning on June 6, the landing boats lurched through enemy fire toward Utah, Omaha, Sword, Gold and Juno beaches. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. at age 56 led the invasion at Utah beach. His actions earned him the Medal of Honor mere weeks after he died of a heart attack in Normandy, where he was buried among heroes who gave their lives to forge a path of liberation, exposure of the Holocaust and victory in the European theater of World War II.

Paul Hutchins brother-in-law took a picture of Arthur Edwin Carpenter's canteen that he spotted being displayed in a museum in Bastogne, Belgium when he was in Europe to observe the 75th anniversary of D-Day. Arthur Carpenter was born 14 Nov 1922 at Lanesboro in the Groton State Forest to Leon and Edith (Peabody) Carpenter of Groton, VT. Arthur grew up in Barre and enlisted in the Army on 7 April 1942 at Rutland, VT. He died on 12 January 1982 in Colorado.

Distinguished Unit Citation awarded to Arthur Edwin Carpenter of Barre for services with his unit in June of 1944 as reported in the local newspaper. Arthur was a great grandson of Andrew Jackson "Jack" Carpenter who was born in Groton, VT and served in Company D 15th Vermont Regiment in the Civil War. He was in the lumber business with J. R. Darling of Groton and was elected the first Road Commissioner when the system of town highways came into effect in 1893. Jack knew more about property lines in Groton than most others and was called upon as a witness in legal disputes.

Barre Boy Given DUC Ribbon
 Pfc. Arthur E. Carpenter, 21, Barre, at an eighth air force aerial reconnaissance station in England which recently was awarded the war department's distinguished unit citation ribbon by the wing commander, Col. Elliott Roosevelt. The award was made to all personnel of a photo group commanded by Lieut.-Col. C. A. Shoop of Beverly Hills, Calif., for "extraordinary heroism, gallantry, and determination" during the month of June. Pfc. Carpenter is a photo laboratory technician, photographic reconnaissance squadron, whose assignment is to obtain the valuable aerial picture of enemy military, maritime and industrial installations. Pfc. Carpenter is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Leon A. Carpenter, 28 Circle st., Barre. His wife, Mrs. Betty E. Carpenter, formerly of Grand Island, Nev., also resides in Barre.



Arthur Edwin Carpenter's canteen on display at the museum in Bastogne, Belgium. Photograph posted on FB by Paul Hutchins. Picture was taken by his brother-in-law who was touring Europe in observance of 75th anniversary of the Allied Forces landing on Normandy beaches.

LUCE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Taken from the Groton Town Report

Twenty-six persons are now employed in one of Vermont's newest industry, the Luce Manufacturing Company, located on Route 302 in Groton.

The Luce Manufacturing Company occupies the building erected in 1947 by the Haldane of Groton Inc., as a base for its woodworking operations. The Luce Company was granted a tax exemption of nine years by the town at a special town meeting January of 1949.

At present the company is manufacturing the so-called "Blue Magic" products, the line consisting of a "Deluxe" Salt and Pepper set, a less expensive "Utility" Salt and Pepper set, a "Range" Salt and Pepper set, a "Krispy Kan", a "Dri-All" and "Evercrisp", the three latter units for use in keeping crackers, potato chips, nuts, etc., dry and crisp. The "Deluxe" Salt and Pepper set is not only for the purpose of providing consistently dry salt, but is attractively gift packaged. Since April, 1949, some one half million units have been sold.

The name "blue Magic" was adopted because of the power of the desiccant to absorb moisture, plus its attractive blue color. After extensive tests in the Good Housekeeping laboratories their approval was awarded to all "Blue Magic" products.

The glass for "Blue Magic" is obtained from the T. C. Wheaton Company of Millville, NJ, the plastic from the Waterbury Companies of Waterbury, CT, the desiccant from the Aluminum Company of America and packaging material from Warner Brothers, Bridgeport, CT. The glass is ground and the assembling and packaging done at the Groton plant. The product is sold through the company's New York office, Manufacturers Agents, Salesmen and Distributors, as well as Retailers. Shipping is taken care of through motor freight, parcel post, rail freight and rail express.

There are several patents pending on "Blue Magic: all owned by the corporation.

Mr. Luce is the inventor of a self-locking nut, known as the Boots Aircraft nut, used extensively throughout the aircraft industry during World War II. Mr. Luce, an ardent aviator, maintaining a plane at the Post Mills airport, may often be seen flying his Navion over Groton and surrounding towns.

Officers of the company are Richard W. Luce of Southport, CT, and Bradford, president; Henry O. Engstrom of Bradford, vice-president in charge of engineering; William H. Arnold of Southport, CT, vice-president in charge of sales; and Charles A. Milton of Darien, CT, secretary and treasurer.

QUEEN RANKS PRESIDENTS

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the U. K. ranked the twelve U. S. Presidents who she had encountered on official State Visits, according to Brian Parchmann in History 101 on 8 Feb 2019 before President Trumps second visit, but it is hard to change first impressions.

Ronald Reagan met with the Queen three times in the U. K. and once at his ranch in CA while President. After he left office he was knighted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace in 1989.

Barack Obama met with the Queen three times: 2009, 2011 and 2016. They had their share of protocol errors, but clearly made an incredible impression, as the Queen always remained smiling.

Gerald Ford met with the Queen only once in 1976 at Washington D. C. to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The photo of President Ford and Queen Elizabeth II dancing was a fitting symbol of the history shared between the U. S. and the U. K.

Dwight Eisenhower met the Queen twice, once in 1957 when she came to the U. S. and in 1959 at her Balmoral Castle home in Scotland. He had also met her earlier when she was a Princess. The Queen also met former President Herbert Hoover informally on her 1957 visit to the U. S.

Harry Truman also met the Queen when she was a Princess representing her father King George VI who was ill and couldn't make the planned Royal visit to the U. S. in 1951.

Richard Nixon met the Queen in 1957 and again in 1958 when he was Vice President representing the U. S. at a memorial service in London to unveil the American Memorial Chapel honoring fallen Americans who fought alongside the British in WWII. He met with the Queen as President in 1969 and again in 1970 in the U. K.

Bill Clinton met the Queen in 1994 at the 50th anniversary of D-Day in Portsmouth, England and again in 2000 at Buckingham Palace.

George H. W. Bush met the Queen in 1989 in the U. K. and in 1991 in the U. S. The U. K. visit had its difficulties dealing with Prime Minister Thatcher, but the U. S. meeting went more smoothly.

John Kennedy met the Queen only once in 1961 at Buckingham Palace. Included in the visit was his wife and her sister and husband. The Presidents wife made public comments that the Queen had poor fashion and the Palace was second rate. The visit did not go smoothly.

Donald Trump has met the Queen twice, once in 2018 and again in 2019 at the 75th anniversary of D-Day. Protestors accompanied both visits.

George W. Bush met the Queen twice. His second visit in 2003 had large numbers of Iraq War protestors which obscured any positive impressions.

Jimmy Carter met the Queen only once in 1977 at Buckingham Palace. His kind-hearted demeanor got him in trouble when he kissed the Queen Mother,

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF MAY 7th MEETING

Richard Montague discussed a number of tools on display at the Peter Paul House. He has been inventorying the GHS collection and labeling many of them to assist visitors. Some brought old tools for Richard to identify and explain their use. Fourteen people attended the program.

Motion to retain 2018 Officers for another year was approved. Meeting schedules were set for second Tuesday of the month with a program at 6pm followed with a business meeting at 7pm. Programs selected were as follows:

June 11—Genealogy by Bill Hodge, Topsham Historical Society

July 9—History of Main Street and Morrison Hall by Erik Volk

August 13—Seyon Lodge History by Lise Shallberg

September 19—Native American History by Phil Coutu

October 5—Fall Foliage Day, women's clothing by Phyllis Burke

October 8—Review of programs and Fall Foliage Day activities

A sandwich sign was approved to advertise the programs in front of the Peter Paul House each month. Housekeeping needs included mowing the grass, removing the cedars that have overgrown, repairing the toilet, turning on the water, and cleaning the rooms for Fall Foliage Day.

The Cedars at the front door were donated and planted by Dale Brown in memory of his family. They have grown so large they are preventing the wood from drying thus causing decay. Smaller plants will be used to replace them. Deborah will bring daylilies to plant under the sign.

Phyllis Burke was reading about roll curtains used in theaters in New England and mention was made that Morrison Hall in Groton had some. I remember two or three rolls at Morrison Hall in the 1930s, One had an outdoor scene and another had an indoor scene. When the curtain at the front of the stage was closed the roll curtain at the back of the stage was rolled up and another one was lowered to change scenes. I think the scenes were painted on what we called oilcloth. Does anyone know what happened to the roll curtains that used to be at Morrison Hall?

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Eileen P. Corcoran, Community Outreach & Media Coordinator

We want to build a stronger local history community together. Join us at an Engagement Session this summer/fall, where we'll come together to talk about the role local historical societies & museums play, common obstacles we face, and how we can work together to build a stronger history community statewide.

Join us at any of the following sessions. Everyone is welcome!

June 14, 1-3pm Lincoln Historical Society- Burnham Hall, Lincoln, VT

July 12, 10am-12pm Jamaica Historical Foundation, Jamaica, VT

July 24, 9-11am Vermont History Center, Barre, VT

August 2, 10am-12pm Old Stone House Museum, Brownington, VT

August 23, 10am-12pm Community Library, Manchester, VT

September 6, 10am-12pm Saint Albans Museum, St. Albans, VT

September 28, 12-2pm Waterbury Historical Society, Waterbury, VT

We appreciate your RSVP to help plan for space and refreshments.
Eileen Corcoran (802) 479-8522; eileen.corcoran@vermonthistory.org

Can't make it to a session?

We have an associated Local History Survey you can fill-out to help us gather more information on what local historical societies & museums need in Vermont. .

We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Support for this project provided by the Windham Foundation

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