
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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Spring 2020

CAMPING IN GROTON



1938 McLure's Student Band camped at local fairs in and around Groton.

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Trying to identify the first people to camp in Groton is pure speculation. Hunters, trappers, and fishermen were undoubtedly here before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 and probably pitched tents for overnight stays. Arrowheads and other stone tools have been found at presumed Indian campsites near the rivers, ponds and trails.

Hosea Welch (1860-1941) wrote about the Indian trails and Gloucester County road and portions of his story was in the summer 2005 GHS newsletter. When the English first settled here, the Connecticut valley was home to the Pequot Indians and their land extended west to Lake Champlain. The Pequots was a large nation with more than twenty tribes, each having a Sachem, or Chief.

Mystic, their seat of government at the mouth of the Connecticut River, was destroyed by the English in 1637. The Coossuck tribe was broken up and their village Coos burned during King Phillips' War in 1676. While their warriors were engaged with King Phillips' War, the Iroquois came across the lake over the Indian trail and swooped down on

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Coos, burned the village, and captured many prisoners with their Chief Peskaret. They were taken back across the lake and adopted into the Iroquois Nation. The rest of the Coossucks were scattered and eventually drifted north and united with the St. Francis Indians in Canada. The Indians never had a permanent settlement at Coos in Newbury after this, but often spent the summer there, returning to Canada in the fall. The St. Francis Indians were made up of remnants of several different tribes with their headquarters at Francois, or Three Rivers in Canada. They also had a village in northwest Vermont, near Swanton, called Massiskow.

At times the French army in Canada would unite with the displaced Indians and come down over this same trail to attack the English settlements in New England. In 1689 the War of William and Queen Anne broke out. During this war the French and Indians united and made several attacks on the New England settlements. In 1699 a treaty provided peace, but this was soon broken and another war was declared.

In 1704 Rouille with 340 French and Indians came up Lake Champlain on the ice and passed over this trail to Coos on snowshoes. Then they went down the Connecticut river to Deerfield, MA. On Feb. 22, 1704 they sacked and burned the settlement, killed forty and took one hundred and twelve inhabitants captive, men women and children, with their pastor, Rev. John Williams. They returned over the same route bringing all the plunder they could carry and draw on sleds, including the old church bell. Undoubtedly they camped many nights, sometimes in Groton, on these many trips over the trail through Groton.

In 1725 a scouting party was sent out from Massachusetts under the command of Captain Benjamin Wright. They left Northfield July 27 and came up the Connecticut River as far as the mouth of Wells River. Hiding their boats and provisions here they started up this trail and arrived August 11 within the present limits of Groton. The next day they reached Groton Pond and camped at the head of the lake that night. The following day they continued their journey toward Lake Champlain,

The French and Indian wars ended with the capture of Quebec in 1759 and Montreal in 1760, and the treaty of Paris in 1763, which made Canada English territory. This trail was also in use quite a lot during the dispute over Vermont between New York and New Hampshire . As some of the towns east of Groton had taken charters under both NY & NH the eastern part of the state was laid out as "Gloucester County, New York." and communications were often carried over this trail. Survey parties were working in this locality and quite a large part of Gloucester

County was surveyed, by New York authorities. A road was surveyed from Newbury to Lake Champlain which followed the old Indian trail. In 1774 considerable work was done on the east end of this road. The workers building this road probably camped sometimes in Groton. Dale Brown (1918-2011) wrote a story about Gloucester County Road through Groton complete with a map in the winter 2009 GHS newsletter.

Aaron Hosmer (1729-1803) was a hunter, trapper, fisherman who spent many nights camping in Groton and surrounding towns, but Mr. Glover couldn't find any evidence he built a permanent dwelling in Groton.

Jesse Heath (1759-1839) a Revolutionary War soldier from Plaistow, NH searching for a place to homestead in 1781 proceeded up the Merrimack, Pemigewasset and Baker Rivers and portaged to the Oliverion which flowed into the Connecticut at Haverhill, NH and with no vacant land available in the area, continued north to the Wells River and into Vermont Territory. There they followed an Indian Trail, known as the Gloucester County Road. At the high point of land, near a water source, Jesse built their log cabin on a lot near present-day Glover Road. Three children were born to Jesse and Phebe in the Groton Territory: John in 1782, Sarah 1784 and Thomas 1785. In 1786, as Groton was being chartered, the Heaths left their cabin 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. In 1800 they were back in Groton where they built a plank home in 1807 and their original log cabin was used as a school house.

Edmund Morse (1764-1843) married Sarah Wesson, daughter of Captain Ephraim Wesson in Haverhill, NH 28 Dec 1786 and they settled in Groton on land that was later surveyed as lot No. 4. Around 1790 Edmund built the first sawmill and gristmill at the site later known as Ricker Mills. With lumber from his sawmill Edmund built what was probably the first plank home in town. Log cabins were considered temporary dwellings then and perhaps that is why his grandson, General Albert Harleigh Hill (1817-1897), an early Groton historian, claimed Edmund Morse was the first permanent settler in town. Soon after the mill was producing lumber, log cabins were being replaced with plank homes and the 1803 Grand List records five.

Prior to the railroads, that operated in Vermont as early as 1848 and in

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Groton by 1873, the rivers and lakes were the primary routes of travel for people and produce. Even the foot trails, horse trails, oxen and wagon trails usually followed the waterways. Where water is of sufficient depth to float a vessel, or where its frozen surface offers winter travel, it is a basic highway, following the natural path of least resistance. In the summer of 1829, the United States Topographical Engineers surveyed the Winooski River from Lake Champlain to Marshfield and proposed a canal to Kettle Pond and Groton Pond connecting with the Wells River to the Connecticut River. This survey crew undoubtedly camped in or near Groton several days.

The Morse mill and its successive owners, Moses Noyes, Silas Lund and sons, Walter Buchanan, and Ira Darling, probably did not have a logging camp but after Joseph Ricker purchased the mill in 1856 and the M&WR railroad was built in 1873 facilities for housing loggers and sawmill workers were built and Ricker Mills became a small settlement with a Post Office and Railway Station. The mills in Groton village and the second mill built by Edmund Morse on the North Branch of the Wells River probably never had logging camps. But when Jonathan R. Darling built the sawmill and mill pond (now Noyes Pond) around 1890 on the South Branch of the Wells River, he also erected a logging camp or boarding house for the loggers, teamsters, sawyers and other employees.

An early sawmill at the outlet of Groton Pond built by Archibald McLaughlin in the 1820's and sold to Hosea Low and then to Samuel and Morris Clark is described in Mr. Glover's Groton on page 95, but there is no mention of a logging camp there.

Logging camps were established at Groton Pond after the Montpelier and Wells River RR provided access to the area. Charles Lord's story in the Spring 2004 Newsletter about Rob Miller's sawmill also describes earlier logging camps at Groton Pond. In 1875 the Groton Pond Lumber Co. built a mill, boarding house and tenant house about a half mile up from the outlet of the lake; the mill being run by steam instead of water power. A branch railroad track from the main line of the M&WR RR to the logging camp, and a railroad station, post office and store were added. In 1883 a forest fire wiped out everything but it was rebuilt the same year. The operation was taken over by A. Baldwin of Wells River and L. Hazen of St. Johnsbury, and operated until timber on their lots was depleted in 1892.

Rob Miller (1870-1956) went to work for Michael Goslant as clerk and surveyor in 1896 shortly after graduation from Albany Business College. In 1902 in partnership with V. E. Ayer of Barre, they formed the Miller-Ayer Lumber Company and bought 9,000 acres from Goslant. Later in 1915, Rob Miller bought out Ayer. The previous mill at Groton

Pond had been destroyed by fire resulting from a boiler explosion which killed one man, and one of the boilers landed across the pond from the mill.

Hollis Lund (1872-1924) of Groton, a millwright and expert carpenter worked on building the new mill for Miller and Ayers.. The new mill was a two story structure with the boilers, engines, shafting, etc. on the ground floor and the saws, etc. on the second floor. The logs were pulled up out of the pond by power on what was known as a wet slip. The sawed lumber was loaded on hand cars in the mill and pushed over rails, outside on elevated runways adjacent to the siding tracks, stacked, dried, and loaded into cars.

There were several lumber camps, one at the north end or head of the pond and one on Cold Brook, about 3 miles from the pond which was known by some as the "French Camp" as most of the workers were French Canadians. Mrs. Peggy Beamis, who with her husband, Herbert, cooked at this camp from Nov. 1923 to early Jan. 1924 and then moved down to the camp at the north end of the pond. Apparently they cut trees in the early winter and then as the snow got deeper they concentrated mostly on hauling the logs down Cold Brook to the "Log Pile". According to Mrs. Beamis, there were as many as 26 men at the camp, mostly French Canadians.

The Lake House built by McLane Marshall (1816-1889) at Ricker's Pond around 1860, when he was issued a license to have a Tavern, was a large two story building with a double piazza overlooking Ricker Pond with a picturesque mountain background. All other inns in town had been operated for the entertainment of occasional travelers whose need was a plate of food or a lodging for the night. The Lake House was definitely a "resort" for those looking for rest or pleasure and comfort during summer vacations or holidays.

In 1862 Mr. Marshall operated a sail boat on the pond called Lady of the Lake, built by John Carrick, for pleasure parties of up to sixty people. The property changed hands frequently, going to William Hubbard, I. N. Hall, then Hall & Darling, and Leverett Page. In 1894 it was purchased by Alexander Dunnett (1852-1920) who renovated it as a summer home.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had two camps in Groton State forest, one at Ricker Pond and the other at Osmore Pond. Males between the ages of 17 and 28 who were physically fit, unemployed, unmarried, and had a family in need of support were eligible for the program. Each Corps member received \$30 per month (about \$538 in today's dollars) and was required to send \$25 of his

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pay back to his family. Young men were selected by local welfare organizations (in Vermont, by town overseers of the poor), then sent to U.S. War Department induction centers, where they were given medical exams, organized into 100 or 200 man companies, clothed, and equipped. A few women were hired as clerks to help run the camps. Later, Eleanor Roosevelt was successful in getting the federal government to establish work camps, known as She-She She Camps, for jobless young women.

The CCC worked to develop Groton State Forest and multiple state parks within it. They conducted reforestation work, developed trails and roads, and constructed campgrounds and shelters. Ricker Pond State Park was constructed by them. In 1933, CCC Company 1217 from New York City was stationed at Ricker Pond and it was followed by Company 1162 in 1935. Ricker Pond was a picnic area with a log shelter, 10 picnic sites with stone fireplaces, and a staff cabin (rangers quarters). Where the current campsite #1 is, you can find an 8' granite picnic table carved into the rock. In 1941, another small cabin was built, which is used today as a weekly rental cottage.

Most of the previous camps would be considered as business, vocational, or homestead camps, but there were also recreational or summer camps for vacations and leisure time. The Lake House at Ricker Pond built as a commercial summer resort by McLane Marshall was turned into a vacation home by Alexander Dunnett in 1894.

In 1895 David N. Richardson (1832-1898) purchased the hill north of Groton village, named it Mt Medad (for Medad Welch a former owner) and built the first private vacation home in Groton village. He was born in Orange, VT and married Janette Darling of Groton in 1858. He was the owner and editor of the Davenport Daily Democrat newspaper; Regent of Iowa St. University; and advisor of President Grover Cleveland. Their plans to vacation and perhaps retire in Groton were interrupted by his death in 1898.

In 1910 Theodore N. Vail (1845-1920) president of AT&T purchased 200 acres and the pond, sawmill and boarding house built by Judge J. R. Darling around 1890, and converted the boarding house into a summer home (see story about Mr. Vail on p. 12) After Mr. Vail's tenure the property was owned by Robert Peckett (1871-1959) of Sugar Hill, NH, Harry Noyes (1871-1955), and Arland Robitzer (1915-1988) before being purchased by the State of Vermont in 1967 as Seyon State Park.

Individual camps and cottages were being built on the shores of Groton Pond in the late 1800's. And by the first decade of the 1900's Groton residents A. J. "Jack" Carpenter (1832-1915), Charles C. Lord (1864-1944), Benjamin F. Clark (1849-1898), Dr. I. N. Eastman (1866-

1938), Dr. Henry Tillotson (1868-1928), and John K. White (1882–1939) had camps at the Pond. Others from Plainfield, Barre and Montpelier were also building camps at the Pond early in the twentieth century.

Marion Lindsay Proudfoot states in her booklet *Camping at the Pond, A History of Lake Groton, Vermont 1970, 57pp* that camping increased from 1905 on both sides of the pond. Groups from various towns seemed to build near each other. Those from Barre and Plainfield chose the middle east shore. Pliny Gale built a large camp on a point half way up on the west side and above this were several families from Montpelier, the Edsons, Wells, Masons, Shaws, Lindsays, Hewitts, and also the Coles from Plainfield. The families from Groton, the Rickers, Lords, Eastmans, Clarks and Whites settled at the north end of the pond. The boat houses belonging to these campers were all at the south end where the boats were safely locked away between trips and during the winter.

McLure's Student Band of Groton, VT with members from Groton and surrounding towns was organized in 1932 and students were taught to play the many different instruments by C. George McLure (1909-1994). The band played concerts and performed marching drills at Groton and throughout New England for fairs, music festivals and other occasions, often camping on overnight events. On our trip to the New York World's Fair in 1940 we camped for a week in the two Army tents, one for the girls and one for the boys. A story about the band was in the Spring 2015 issue of the GHS newsletter.

Here is a listing of related stories in previous newsletters:

Seyon Ranch by Bonnie Robitzer—Fall 2003
Rob Miller's Sawmill by Charles Lord—Spring 2004
Indian Trails by Hosea Welch—Summer 2005
Jesse Heath by Dale Brown—Winter 2006
Aaron Hosmer hunting, fishing, camping—Spring 2006
Edmund Morse first sawmill—Fall 2006
Early Surveys in Groton by Hosea Welch—Spring 2008
Gloucester County Road by Dale Brown—Winter 2009
Proposed Canal by Dale Brown—spring 2009
McLure's Student Band—Spring 2015
CCC Camps Groton State Forest—Summer 2017

PICTURES of some Camps



White's summer camp at Groton Pond



Lord's summer camp at Groton Pond



Logging camp converted to Seyon Ranch Guest House at Noyes Pond



Clark, Carpenter and Pillsbury Camps at Groton Pond log pile about 1905 from Lake Groton Association web site.



Hunting Camps at Groton Pond about 1910 from Lake Groton Association web site.

MAYFLOWER QUADRICENTENNIAL

1620—2020

This year the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims voyage on the Mayflower from Plymouth, England to the new world and establishment of Plymouth Plantation in New England is being celebrated by four nations; United States, United Kingdom, Netherlands, and the Wampanoag Nation.

In 1608, a congregation of Protestants from Nottinghamshire, left England for Leyden, Holland. They refused to pledge allegiance to the Church of England any longer, which they believed was as corrupt and idolatrous as the Catholic Church it had replaced. They differed from the Puritans, who also had objections to the English church but wanted to reform it from within. The Separatists were seeking a place to worship freely,

The Separatists, or “Saints,” as they called themselves, did find religious freedom in Holland, but also found a secular life that was very difficult. They were excluded from Dutch craft guilds, leaving them with menial, low-paying jobs. But worse, Holland’s easygoing life style was alarmingly seductive to some of their children. These young people were “drawn away,” leader William Bradford wrote, “by evill [sic] example into extravagance and dangerous courses.” For the devout Separatists, it was the last straw. They decided to go to a place without government interference or worldly distraction: the “New World” across the Atlantic Ocean.

They returned to London to get organized and a merchant advanced the money for their journey. The Virginia Company gave permission to establish a settlement, or “plantation,” on the East Coast between 38 and 41 degrees north latitude, roughly between the Chesapeake Bay and the Hudson River. The King of England gave permission to leave the Church of England, “provided they carried themselves peaceably.”

In August 1620, a group of about 40 Saints joined a much larger group of (comparatively) secular colonists – “Strangers,” to the Saints – and set sail from Southampton on two merchant ships: the Mayflower and the Speedwell. The Speedwell soon started to leak, however, and the ships headed back to port in Plymouth. They squeezed themselves and their belongings onto the Mayflower, a cargo ship about 80 feet long and 24 feet wide. The Mayflower left once again with 102 passengers under command of Captain Christopher Jones.

Because the leaky Speedwell caused delay, the Mayflower crossed the Atlantic at the height of storm season and the journey was horribly

unpleasant. Many passengers were so seasick they could scarcely get up, and the waves were so rough one "Stranger" was swept overboard. It was "the just hand of God upon him," Bradford wrote later, for the young sailor had been "a proud and very profane yonge man."

After sixty-six days at sea, they reached the New World and found an abandoned Indian village. They were also in the wrong place: Cape Cod was 42 degrees North latitude, well north of the Virginia Company's territory. Technically, the colonists had no right to be there.

To establish a legitimate colony, 41 Saints and Strangers signed the Mayflower Compact creating a "civil Body Politick" governed by elected officials with "just and equal laws" and swore allegiance to the English king. It was the first document to establish self-government in the New World and set an example for others seeking independence from England.

The colonists spent the first winter living onboard the Mayflower. Only 53 passengers and half the crew survived. Women suffered hard, of the 19 who boarded the Mayflower, only five survived the cold New England winter, confined to the ship where disease was rampant. The Mayflower sailed back to England in April 1621. After they moved ashore, the colonists faced even more challenges.

During their first winter in America, more than half of them died from malnutrition, disease and exposure to the harsh New England weather. Without the help of the area's native people, it is likely none of the colonists would have survived. An English-speaking Abenaki named Samoset helped them form an alliance with the local Wampanoags, who taught the colonists how to hunt local animals, gather shellfish and grow corn, beans and squash.

IN MEMORIAM

Georgiana (Frye) Page, 21 Dec 1939-28 Nov 2019, age 79
Lila (Covey) O'Donnell, 12 May 1937-10 Dec 2019, age 82
David E. Dickey, 28 Oct 1940-2 Jan 2020, age 79
Howard E. Page, 28 Sep 1915-20 Jan 2020, age 104
H. Gordon Page, 24 Nov 1918-9 Feb 2020, age 101
Earlene (Legare) Wetherbee, 13 Dec 1943-12 Feb 2020, age 76
Harold S. Eastman Jr. 18 Jun 1939-15 Feb 2020, age 80
Laurel (Murray) Goodwin, 29 Mar 1946-9 Mar 2020, age 73
Bryan S. Gould, 25 Apr 1961-13 Mar 2020, age 58

THEODORE NEWTON VAIL 1845-1920

Based on Wikipedia 3/13/2020

Theodore N. Vail first visited Vermont in 1883 where he purchased a 1,500-acre farm in Lyndon, VT, Speedwell Farms, site of conferences that led to American Telephone & Telegraph Co. (AT&T) being formed in 1885 and he served as its first president. In 1910 he acquired 200 acres in Groton, VT with the pond and buildings, constructed by Judge Jonathan R. Darling for a logging and lumbering business and owned by Senator Silas L. Griffin (Now part of Seyon State Park). Mr. Vail remodeled the lumber camp building to entertain guests and conduct ATT&T business away from Speedwell Farms, which was connected by telephone.

He served as General Manager of American Bell Telephone Co. from 1878 to 1889. He returned to AT&T, parent company of Bell Telephone Co., in 1907 to rescue it from rapidly expanding competition from smaller phone companies. Mr. Vail focused on providing long distance service and charging the smaller companies to use AT&T lines, eventually acquiring many of them and effectively having a telephone monopoly. By 1915 AT&T had established the nation's first coast-to-coast, long-distance telephone service and essentially owned the industry until a federal court ordered it dismantled in the 1980s.

Theodore Vail's legacy lives on in Lyndon, VT with his contributions to their educational institutions. In 1912 he helped save a boarding school with students from around the world, a predecessor of Lyndon Institute. He bequeathed Speedwell Farms to the state and in 1951 it became part of Lyndon State College. During its early years, the college was housed in his home and some of the farm buildings. His daughter, Katherine Vail Marsters helped found Bennington College twelve years after her father's death.

Theodore Vail was born July 16, 1845, near Minerva, Ohio into a wealthy and influential family, whose members descended from John Vail, a Quaker preacher who settled in New Jersey in 1710. Theodore's family had a strong tradition of mechanical innovation, business acumen, and foresight. His relatives were builders, inventors, and engineers. His grandfather, Lewis Vail, was a civil engineer who moved to Ohio and made his reputation building canals and highways, major infrastructures in American history. Stephen Vail, his uncle, founded the Speedwell Iron Works in NJ and furnished much of the mechanical technology for the first steamship to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Speedwell Farms in Lyndon, VT was named after this business.

His uncle Stephen, together with Stephen's sons George and Alfred

Vail, funded inventor Samuel Morse to develop his wireless transmitter. Cousin Alfred Vail invented the dot-and-dash alphabet utilized by Morse's telegraph. In 1858 Theodore learned to operate this telegraph and moved to New Jersey. When he turned 19, he was employed by United States Telegraph in New York City, which later became the Western Union Telegraph Co., a major competitor of the telephone.

In 1866 he moved to Iowa and three years later, he joined the U.S. Post Office, working in the postal railway service. He started the "Fast Mail," the first mail-only train service, which in 1875 began operations between New York City and Chicago. In 1876 he became general superintendent of railway mail service in Washington, DC.

In 1878 he left the Postal Office to be general manager of American Bell Telephone Company, which was organized on July 9, 1877 by Gardiner G. Hubbard, father-in-law of Alexander Graham Bell. Hubbard, met Vail when he was involved in congressional investigations of Post Office payments for mail transportation, lured him from the postal service to the new company. Hubbard recognized Vail had the qualities necessary to head a new and technologically innovative company. And Vail recognized the viability of the telephone invention and realized its potential applications.

At Bell, Alexander Graham Bell, inventor, became the company's "electrician," earning a nominal salary of \$3,000 annually. Bell's assistant, Thomas Watson, recipient of the world's first-ever phone call, was named superintendent of research and manufacturing, and Vail was in charge of operations until 1887.

A major accomplishment was expanding local telephone exchanges. In 1881 he established the first long-distance phone system from Boston, MA, to Providence, RI. By 1885 Vail created an integrated supply division and a network of affiliates licensed by the parent company. Perhaps even more significant, he created an effective research and development branch which changed the way people communicated with each other. He established the Western Electric Company, a division of Bell Telephone that built telephone equipment.

In 1907 when Vail returned as president of AT&T, the Bell patents had expired and hundreds of independent local firms were competing with Bell. Vail chose to cooperate with the new competitors, charging them a fee for connection with his long-distance lines. In 1915 the first transcontinental telephone line was opened, and, in the same year, radio-telephone communications began across the Atlantic Ocean. Vail directed U.S. telephone services for the government during World War I, and stayed on as AT&T president until retiring in 1919. He died 16 April 1920 at Baltimore, MD.

Groton Historical Society News

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Expanding on the public interest and enjoyment of the Seyon Pond Program we hosted in 2019, we will turn our historical gaze towards another of Groton's aquatic gems this year, Lake Groton, or Groton Pond, as it was known in the past.

Our historic collection of clothing includes 2 bathing outfits from the late 1800's, so we are exploring a possible fashion focus on bathing suits.

With luck we will print some Groton Pond recollections from the early and mid 1900's.

A beautiful detailed map of the lake will also be available for sale later this summer.

You can now purchase books from GHS on line by using your credit card.. Go to grotonvthistory@gmail.com and request information about the procedure.

Books for sale are:

Mr. Glover's Groton

The Civil War by S. N. Eastman

Mr. Glover's Childhood

Johnny White's Memories of Groton 1904-1955

2020 Calendars

We are still seeking donations for the urgently needed repairs and painting of the Peter Paul House. Donations may also be made with your credit card. Email: grotonvthistory@gmail.com with the amount you wish to donate and you will receive a prompt reply from a real person who lives in Groton!

. "Stay tuned" to Facebook and the GHS website for more info as it becomes available.

Evolution of Family Living

The covid-19 pandemic of 2020 may be a paradigm changing event for American families. Efforts to slow spread of the disease has many people working from home to avoid contact with anyone infected. Children were sent home from school, so working at home allowed parents to care for their own children increasing bonding and family time together.

In the twentieth century, American households were greatly influenced by technology. The wood and coal burning stoves were replaced with gas or electric ranges; electric washing machines replaced the metal washboard; gas or electric dryers replaced the clothesline; the vacuum cleaner replaced the broom; the refrigerator replaced the ice box and root cellar; electric water pumps replaced the bucket and the well; and indoor plumbing replaced the outhouse.

But it didn't stop there; new 'labor-saving' machines became available at a rapid rate in the 1930's with smaller and cheaper electric motors and the widespread distribution of electricity by the rural electrification act (REA). Toasters, mixers, blenders, cookers, coffee makers, can openers, and microwaves are just a few examples of the many appliances that became available to assist the homemaker. Machines for housework and farm work replaced much of the hired domestic help.

The automobile replaced not only the horse and buggy, but also a lot of the public transportation, and home deliveries. When more people were driving, more businessmen stopped delivery service. The iceman didn't come anymore and neither did the milkman, the bakery truck, the butcher, the grocer, the knife sharpener, the drycleaner, the junk dealer, the seamstress, or the doctor.

By early this century deliveries returned with online companies like Ebay and Amazon. And improved internet services allowed some people to work at home. Today more and more jobs are being designed to be performed from home. Necessity is the mother of invention and many changes today may become tomorrows norms.

See the story of Technology and Family Life in 1900's in the Winter 2007 issue of the GHS newsletter available on GHS website.

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