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# GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter

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Volume 34 Issue 2

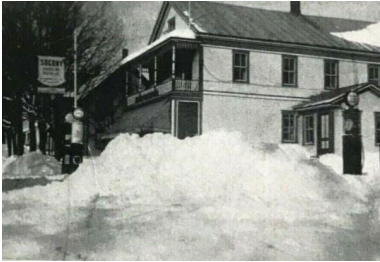
Groton, Vermont 05046

Spring 2021

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## GROTON GENERAL STORE

Stephen Hatch (1968-1991)



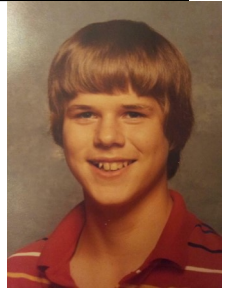
1930

John K. White General Store

### 2020 OFFICERS

President	Deborah Jurist
Vice President	Brent Smith
Secretaries	Phyllis Burke
	Lise Shallberg
Treasurer	Susan Pelkey Smith
Web Site Editor	Mike Gaiss
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*Author: Stephen Hatch, son of Ralph (1930-1999) and Jackalyn (White) Hatch (1941-2002), was born 6 December 1967 and grew up*



*in Groton graduating from Blue Mountain Union High School in 1985. He wrote this story about the history and influence of his Grandparents and Great Grandparents Store for his senior English class. Stephen died in a tragic accident on 28 December 1991. The paper has been edited with birth and death dates added for deceased people mentioned to help identify them for the reader.*

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About 1782 settlers began arriving in the northeast corner of Groton near the Glover District. They established homes and raised their families by cutting

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lumber, farming the land, and selling their produce to those in nearby communities.

As the population increased with new families arriving the settlement expanded into the valley, which today is the Main Street of Groton. The settlers built homes, schools, hotels, inns, taverns, and churches.

Inn Keeper, McLane Marshall (1816-1889) built the second Inn or Tavern in Groton in the 1840's and operated it until 1854 when Jesse Heath Page (1821-1906) took over for a couple of years. George Welch (1816-1865), son of Medad and Abigail (Hosmer) Welch, then owned it for five years. During this time, it was known as The Marshall Tavern.

McLane Marshall also built the Lake House at Rickers Pond in the 1860's and operated it for a few years after he was involved in the notorious Bristol Bill counterfeiting escapade in 1850. Jesse Page went to Ohio where he died. And George Welch went back to the Groton Hotel when Almon Clark (1820-1903) purchased the tavern in 1867 and renamed it the American House.

There were several Inn Keepers after Almon Clark, including Azro Joseph Bailey (1816-1900) and William B. Jones (1833-1926) before Hon. Jonathan Robards Darling (1823-1910) purchased the property in 1877.

While the building was an inn or tavern the attached hall served the community as a place for both public and private gatherings such as Town meetings, weddings, and dances. In 1877 the east wing, which was above the horse sheds, was detached from the hall by Andrew Jackson Carpenter (1832-1915) (my great, great, great grandfather) who relocated it closer to the road and remodeled it for his home. Now (1985) the house is owned and occupied by Alice (Lord) Goodine (1905-1998).

Hon. Jonathan Darling, who previously had a mercantile business at the foot of Minard Hill in the building east of the Peter Paul House (later owned by George H. Pillsbury), turned

the American House tavern 90 degrees and moved it closer to the street. He converted the tavern into a general merchandise business with three apartments on the second floor, one of which was the dentist office of Dr. Garnet Charles Cowan (1875 -1944).

Judge Darling, great grandson of John Darling (1744-1830) who brought his family to Groton in 1787, was a life-time citizen and contributor to the affairs of the town. He was a partner with Isaac McClary Ricker (1839-1910) in the village sawmill and later built the sawmill in West Groton at what is now Seyon State Park. His son, Robert Nelson Darling (1859-1932) managed the sawmill business and his son, John Taisey Darling (1856-1924) managed the store. Clerks working for J. T. Darling included Sewell Carpenter (1872-1920), Bernard Seth Eastman (1880-1921), and Augustus Harmon Tellier (1873-1951).

The next proprietor of the store was Bernard S. Eastman who owned it until his death on 3 July 1921. Bernard, son of Dr. Seth Newton Eastman (1843-1913) and Evalona Darling (1853-1903), was a nephew of Judge Darling. Clerks working for B. S. Eastman included, Sewell Carpenter, who also worked for J. T. Darling, and Robert Nelson Darling, who later managed his father's sawmill business. Bernard was one of the big four at the Turning Works in Groton along with Charles John Bailey (1867-1941), Ernest Frank Clark (1883-1923), and Robert Alexander Davidson (1879-1968).

Bernard's widow, Alice (Morrison) Eastman (1881-1951), daughter of James and Alice (Latto) Morrison, grew up in South Ryegate. She sold the property to George Cleon Whitehill (1884 -1952) and John Knight White (1882-1939) in October 1921 for \$5,500 including the land, building, and all interest in a certain spring of water supplying the property.

G. Cleon Whitehill was also in partnership with Harold Raymond Page (1888-1920) in the undertaking business. In 1924, after Mr. Pages death, he sold his half-interest in the store to John K. White for \$3,250. Mr. Whitehill then moved to

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Bellows Falls, VT and later Carroll Edmund Ricker (1892-1968) became the undertaker in town.

John K. White, my great grandfather, was born and raised in Topsham. He was a successful farmer growing vegetables, maple sugaring, and raising a large herd of cattle. He liked to hunt, trap, and fish. After purchasing the store, he moved to Groton in 1922 with his wife, Helene Julia (Taplin) White (1877-1981) and their son, Philip Taplin "PT" White (1915-1975). John was a Past Master of the Minerva Lodge, member of the Bradford Chapter and Mt. Sinai Temple #3 in Montpelier. He did not hold any town offices to avoid possible conflict of interest with his business. He was the sole proprietor of the store from 1924 until his death on 25 December 1939. During this time, the horse sheds beneath the apartments were replaced with a two-car garage and two public restrooms. The porch on the east side of the store was enclosed for an office. Clerks for J. K. White included H. L. Roosevelt Leete (1899-1939), Frank Taplin (1879-1965) J. K. White's brother-in-law, Ralph Pillsbury (1887-1954) who clerked for 19 years, Dr. Cyrus D. Eastman (1906-1980) before graduating from UVM Medical School in 1930, John French (1904-1956), Seth N. Eastman (1911-1975), and Fred Frost (1888-1936).

Ownership of the store went to his widow, Helene, and their son, "PT" White, who managed the store as John K. White Estate until 1974, except from May 1945 until August 1946 when PT was called into the Armed Forces and the store was closed. Helene was born in Corinth in 1877, attended Corinth Elementary and Wells River High Schools, and taught in several local schools. She was a life member of the Groton United Methodist Church.

Philip T. White, known as "PT", worked as store clerk for his father for five years before his father's death in 1939. He was a member of the Methodist Church and town auditor, and like his father, he did not hold any town office after becoming owner of the store. He was Past Master of the Pulaski Lodge in

Wells River, member of the Order of Elks, and the American Legion.

In 1938 PT married Nellie Mae “Pudie” Roberts (1916 -1998), daughter of Harley and Nellie Mae (White) Roberts. She graduated from Groton High School in 1934, was a member of the Groton Methodist Church, Past Matron of Corinthian Chapter #42 Order of Eastern Star, and member of the Groton School Board from 1958 until 1968, replacing Nellie French who had resigned. The Vermont Education Association presented Pudie an award in 1965 for significant contribution to education in the state. As a member of Blue Mountain Union #21 School Board, she helped chose the site for the new school. After 19 years working for the National Bank of Newbury which later became the Wells River Savings Bank, she retired.

The store interior was repainted in 1946 and the backstops for the front windows were built to provide more display space. Clerks for PT and his wife included Ralph Pillsbury (1908-1963), Clarence Welch (1906-1975), Vern Haskell (1924-2013), Douglas French (1929-1991), Bart Eastman (1907-1992), Lyle Edwards (1927-2018), Deane Page (1930-2020), Raymond Page (1907-2005), Arland Robitzer, Darryl Hamlett, Donald Hatch (1935-2001), Harold Dolson (1901-1976), Dolly Gandin (1928-2001), and the two daughters of PT and Pudie – Lois and Jackalyn White.

In 1974, a year before PT White died, Larry (1943-1997) and Dolores (Brown) Hamlett purchased the business and named it **Groton General Store**. Some major changes they made were removing the back partition for more usable space and removing the old counters and glass cases giving the store a new and more modern look.

Larry Hamlett lived in Danville and West Burke earlier and was foreman at Hill Martin in Lyndonville, VT. Dolores is Larry’s wife and still resides in Groton. Clerks for Larry and Dolores included Charlotte Sanville (1938-2020), Steve

*(Continued from page 5)*

Rigot, Mike Gordon, Rodney Tinkham, Dale Tinkham, Mike Fenoff, Shirley Bemis, and Glen Darling (1950-1992).

Richard "Dick" (1939-2018) and Wanda (Hamlett) Peters bought the store in September 1980. A fire destroyed the second floor and caused sever damage to the store that year Dick and Wanda previously lived in Walden, VT and Richard was employed by Fairbanks Weighing Division of Colt Industries in St. Johnsbury, VT for 16 years. Wanda worked nine years for Universal CIT Finance Company. Dick and Wanda have two children, Toby, and Julie Peters. Clerks working in the store during Dick and Wanda Peters ownership (up to 1985) include, Mike Gordon, Bill Randall (1938-2011), Kelly Wood, and several others.

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*Postscript:* Dick and Wanda Peters owned and operated Groton General Store for 23 years until Dick hung up his "SHUT" sign on the front door in 2003 for the last time. The property along with the adjoining properties on the east and west (plus the Pancake House and Welch Block) were purchased by Gilman Housing Trust. They renovated the store and provided space for a library and low-cost housing in Groton. Gilman Housing also purchased the Herman Clark (1917-1999) property and constructed Clark's Landing, a low-cost housing facility for the community.

The store now houses Artesano Meadery on the main floor, a business making wine from honey and fruit, plus vinegar and tonics, and apartments above. Marshall's Tavern that A. J. Carpenter separated and relocated east of the store and converted to a home, last occupied by Alice (Lord) Goodine, now houses the Groton Town Library.

*Credits to Allen Goodine, Lois Boemig and Wanda Peters for providing copies of pictures and Stephen's report*

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## PILGRIM REMAINS at COLE'S HILL

From Historical Digression on Wikipedia

William Bradford wrote “But it pleased God to vissite us then, with death dayly, and with so generall a disease, that the living were scarce able to burie the dead; and ye well not in any measure sufficiente to tend ye sick.” in *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

One of the saddest times in the history of Plymouth Colony was that first winter, January through March of 1621.

As if challenges to establish the colony were not enough, most of the settlers we now call Pilgrims fell ill just after arriving. Bradford recounted, sometimes two or three died each day. They managed to hastily build one small structure which was filled with the sick. Others were bedridden aboard the *Mayflower* which did not immediately return to England as planned because most of the crew was also sick. By April, half the settlers had perished, around 50 in number.

Bradford tells us that only seven of them avoided illness. Upon these few fell the task of caring for the afflicted and burying the dead. None of the early sources tell exactly where they were buried. There was neither time nor the resources to mark the graves in any lasting way. And so, the location of the burials of half of the *Mayflower* passengers, including first Governor John Carver, Elizabeth Winslow, and Rose Standish to mention just a few, was lost, and forgotten.

Cole's Hill in Plymouth, now part of Pilgrim Memorial State Park, is a low but steep rise of about 30 feet in elevation, virtually at the water's edge, overlooking Plymouth Rock and Plymouth Harbor. The area where the burials took place is just over 100 yards north of the first street where the Pilgrims built their primitive houses. It is named for James Cole, an early settler who placed a dwelling there in the 1630s.

What is remarkable about the history of Cole's Hill is not the fact that its identity as a burial ground was lost, but the slow and seemingly nonchalant way later generations came to terms with the discovery of the burying ground.

The first indication came in 1735 when torrential rain caused a small gully through the middle of Cole's Hill. Many bones were exposed and washed into the harbor. Around this time, Elder Thomas Faunce (1647-1746), who was old enough to have known some of the first settlers in his childhood, imparted the fact that Cole's Hill was the site of the first burying place. He also was the first to promote Plymouth Rock as the landing place of the Pilgrims. It could be that

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## PICTURES of GROTON GENERAL STORE



Groton General Store and Alice (Lord) Goodine's home 2004



Groton General Store and Library 2006





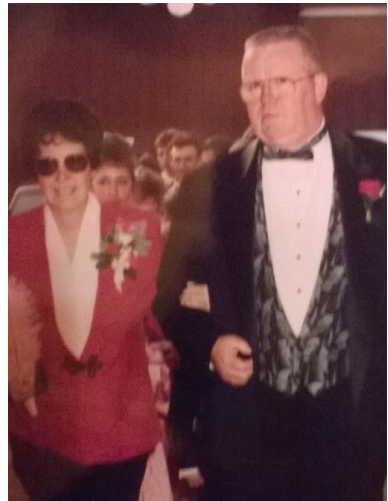
Helene T. and John K. White owned and operated the store between 1921 and 1939, when John died.



Nellie R. and Philip T. White owned the store from 1939 until 1974. They were known as "Pudie" and "PT"



Larry Hamlett and his wife Dolores B. owned and operated the store between 1974 and 1980.



Wanda H. and Richard "Dick" Peters owned and operated the store from 1980 until 2003.

(Continued from page 7)

he simply had a fondness for telling stories based only on folklore. Or perhaps he knew exactly what he was talking about.

Either way, the significance of Cole's Hill did not seem important at the time. That generation had an emerging Revolution to deal with. And the area around Cole's Hill was expanding into a commercial district so setting it aside as hallowed ground was not a priority.

In 1809 a skull was exposed on the hill, but this made no lasting impression. The most significant discoveries came in 1855 when digging a trench across Cole's Hill for water lines. Several graves were accidentally opened. John Goodwin in *The Pilgrim Republic*, (1888), reported two skeletons were found, a male and female. Presumed to be John and Catherine Carver, they were re-interred on Burial Hill the town's burying ground since 1637.

The other remains uncovered in 1855, according to *Old Plymouth – A Guide to its Localities and Objects of Interest*, by Avery & Doten (1881), "One of the skulls was sent to an anatomist in Boston, and pronounced to be of the Caucasian race. The remains were carefully gathered and placed in a metallic box, properly inscribed, and interred on Burial Hill, later deposited in the chamber of the canopy over the Rock, at its completion in the year 1867."

Construction of a monument over Plymouth Rock was done by the Pilgrim Society (founded in 1820). The first "canopy" over the Rock was designed by architect Hammatt Billings. It housed the remains discovered in 1855 as well as some discovered later. Beginning in the 1850s, and continuing several decades thereafter, the Pilgrim Society acquired land around Plymouth Rock and part of Cole's Hill. American culture had changed. A desire to honor the Pilgrims and the landmarks associated with them was now a high priority. Still, it would be some time before the graves on Cole's Hill were completely protected.

According to John Goodwin, in 1879 when work was being done on the southeast side of the hill, more bones were unearthed, and some were carried away by the spectators in remembrance of their 'renowned sires'. A bit disturbing, really. Where these 1879 remains ended up is anyone's guess.

In 1883, a workman digging post holes near a house on Cole's Hill, tossed a skull with a spade full of dirt. The skull was examined by a local doctor and identified as an elderly white man. A month later, another grave was accidentally opened. This seemed to be the watershed moment.

A granite tablet was placed on Cole's Hill at the foot of Middle

Street. About 150 years after discovering remains, the 1621 burying place of the Pilgrims was permanently recognized. The tablet, now replaced by the sarcophagus, read, "On this hill The Pilgrims who died the first winter were buried. This tablet marks the spot where lies the body of one found Oct. 8, 1883. The body of another found on the 27th of the following month lies 8 feet northwest of the west-erly corner of this stone. Erected 1884."

Other measures were taken to preserve Cole's Hill. Joseph Henry Stickney sat up a trust to acquire additional land on Cole's Hill, remove buildings, and extend the area south to Leiden Street, the original site of the Pilgrim houses. This was completed in 1917.

In 1920 a new monument was built over Plymouth Rock. The Pilgrim remains in the canopy were moved to a new sarcophagus, completed in 1921—a monument erected by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants which still stands. It lists the names of those who perished during the first winter.

The inscription reads, in part, "This Monument Marks the First Burying Ground of the Passengers of the Mayflower! History has no nobler venture for faith and freedom than these Pilgrims. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings, often in hunger and cold, they laid the foundations of a state wherein every man, through countless ages, should have liberty to worship God in his own way. May their example inspire thee to do thy part in perpetuating and spreading the ideals of our republic in the world!

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## IN MEMORIAM

- 25 Feb 2021 Douglas P. Boyce age 57
- 23 Feb 2021 Martha F. (Crocker) Crown age 74
- 10 Feb 2021 Roberta L. (DiNofrio) Dana age 70
- 16 Jan 2021 Ellen (Bailey) Edwards age 88
- 4 Jan 2021 Beverley V. (Legare) Hatch age 84
- 4 Dec 2020 Deane K. Page age 90
- 4 Nov 2020 James W. Dudley age 78
- 20 Sep 2020 Ruth (Crown) Wilson age 83
- 7 Jun 2020 Paul S. Tinkham age 92

## VERMONT TABLES

On 23 May 1969 Robert and Byron Tomlinson, brothers from Connecticut, purchased the Tunbridge Tables business from John Rowell and incorporated it as Vermont Tables and Handicrafts, Inc., Groton, VT. Tunbridge Tables were manufactured in the building that previously housed the Farm Machine Exchange of Horace “Hod” James, and prior to that it was Lee Blanchard’s Store. The business and building were severely damaged by a fire in 1967 and Merchants Bank building (now converted to living quarters) was later built on the site. Vermont Tables and Handicrafts, Inc. moved the business into the factory built in 1947 by Haldane of Groton Inc. and constructed a log cabin to showcase their wares. They also had travelling exhibits displaying their products at Fairs and Home-and-Boat Shows in the Northeast and Midwest. The company was listed in Mr. Glover’s Groton in 1978 as one of the town’s active businesses. After 15 plus years in Groton, the business closed in the 1980’s and the building was sold. Nathan Puffer now has Groton Timberworks, Inc. in the eastern portion of the building and Troy Oliver and Toby Peters have an automotive repair shop in the western portion where Trailside, a Polaris Snowmobile dealership, was previously located.



Luce Manufacturing Co. made “Blue Magic” products in 1950 in the factory built in 1947 by Haldane of Groton Inc. Eastern States processed eggs in the factory for a number of years between Luce’s and VT Tables’ occupancies.

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## Groton Historical Society Report Spring 2021

By Deborah Jurist, President

Our plans for the 2021 season will feature exploring the history and importance of Groton Pond, which was subsequently renamed Lake Groton, to the town of Groton. There will be a reprint of the 1970 booklet “Camping at the Pond” written by Marion Lindsay Proudfoot and we have received fabulous photographs to include in the publication. There may be a swim suit exhibit at the PPH this year built around the antique woolen swimming costumes in our collection.

Anyone with pictures of “bathing beauties”, male or female, that were taken on the Pond between the years 1940 and 1970 are encouraged to contact Deborah Jurist via email at [grotonvthistory@gmail.com](mailto:grotonvthistory@gmail.com). Pictures should be 500 kb or more, so they can be printed!

We are working on a large-sized map of Lake Groton showing where all the camps are located along with a legend showing camp owners names.

It was so sad to lose our dear “Groton Historian” Deane Page. Deane’s work with the young GHS, when the Peter Paul House was acquired and restored, was integral to the success of the whole project. Both Deane and Bing’s love, sweat and effort and are in the painted and wallpapered walls, stripped paint and refinished stairs, the electrical wiring, the kitchen stove, and even the upholstered chairs in the west parlor. Bing always encourages and compliments every effort and she means every word she says.

Deane, we are deeply grateful we had the opportunity to learn so much from you. You will be sorely missed, indeed.

We lost another lifetime supporter of the GHS when Roberta Dana recently passed away. Roberta really cared deeply about Groton and was always proud to participate in GHS efforts. She was a lot of fun and never missed a beat.

Huge thanks go out to everyone who pitched in with donations for

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the painting and repair of the Peter Paul House Restoration Project which had a price tag of \$12,000. The north and east sides were completed and paid for in 2020. We have engaged Matt Nunn again to do the south and west sides in 2021. We are literally inches away from reaching the fundraising goal of \$6,000, that was needed to finish this project and are especially grateful for the contributions made in Deane's honor and for the incredible matching gift that Susan Pelkey Smith and Dwaine Smith gave to the GHS during our last round of fundraising.

As you can see from the Treasurer's Report, GHS is healthy financially and membership is growing. We are optimistically looking forward to once again contributing to the Groton Community and keeping our history alive.

Jigsaw puzzles and books are always available for sale by calling Lise Shallberg at (802) 584-3283.

Here's hoping we can see all our friends and members at the Peter Paul House in 2021.

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**Treasurer's Report 12/31/2020**  
**By Susan Pelkey Smith**

Checking Account Balance, Beginning of Year **\$5,966.39**

**Income:**

Memberships	1,285.00
Fundraising	
Books and calendars	342.93
Puzzles	3,247.57
Donations—general	272.00
Painting and improvements	1,614.00
Memory of Deane Page—painting etc	1,350.00
In-kind donations	<u>357.00</u>
	<u>7,183.50</u>

**Total Income** **8,468.50**

**Expenses:**

Painting & Repairs	5,037.49
Operating expenses	707.35
Administration	1,048.33
Insurance	<u>950.00</u>

**Total Expenses** **(7,743.17)**

**Checking Account** Balance end of year **\$6,691.72**

**Cash on Hand for Events** **50.00**

**Certificate of Deposit - Matures 7/19/2021**

CD Balance Beginning of Year	10,000.00
Interest Earned	<u>70.83</u>
CD Balance end of Year	<b><u>10,129.65</u></b>

**Combined Cash Balances, End of Yea** **\$16,871.37**

**Additional Funds Collected in 2021 through 2/26/2021**

Membership	\$825.00
Fundraising	
Books and Calendars	156.00
Puzzles	25.00
Donations—general	1,424.00
Painting and improvements	1,500.00
Memory of Deane Page—painting	1,000.00
In-kind donations	<u>104.54</u>
	<b><u>4,209.54</u></b>

2021 Collections through 2/26 **\$5,034.54**

**Total Fundraising Income 1/1/2020 - 2/26/2021**

2020	\$7,183.50
2021 to date	<u>4,209.54</u>

**Total Raised to Date** **\$11,393.04**

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Groton Historical Society Newsletter  
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