
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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“grotonvt” Family Tree

J. Willard Benzie



Peter Paul House
Home of Groton Historical Society

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Groton history committee appointed at the 1941 Town Meeting secured the services of Waldo Glover to write a history of the town for celebrating Vermont’s sesquicentennial (1791-1941).

But World War II 1941-1946 delayed the project. After the war Mr. Glover continued work on the history of the town and families until his death in 1976. The Groton Historical Society, which evolved from the town history committee, completed Mr. Glover’s manuscript and published it in 1978 but without the family histories.

In the 1980’s GHS hired Gwendolen (Somers) Hagen (1907-2003) to type a register of each family from the family group sheets Mr. Glover had collected. I began entering these family records into a searchable genealogy program, Brother’s Keeper, in 1990.

I started with the Darling family to learn more about my wife, Celia Darling’s family. Then I went to the Welch family and found many people were already in the Darling

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family, so I put everyone in one family I called grotonvt to avoid entering the same person more than once. The records submitted by individual families for the same person in more than one family, sometimes was different. If I couldn't confirm the correct record, I entered the first one I found and noted the others. Occasionally it was a typo but most often it was a difference in the different family records. I can relate to this as my birth is recorded in East Calais, Washington Co., VT where I was born on my maternal grandparents farm when my parents were visiting for the weekend, and also in Groton, where we were living, by my paternal grandfather who was town treasurer at the time. So even the official vital records don't always agree.

Over the years many individuals with ties to Groton, have updated their family records for GHS, but some have never provided any of their family history. My parents were one of those who never returned Mr. Glover's letter in the 1950's. I found his letter with a self stamped envelope and the blank family group sheet he had included.

When I started entering names in the grotonvt family records, I asked M. Ross McLeod (1923-2016) for his family record as he was editor of the GHS newsletter at the time and he replied "I am not from Groton." although he spent more than two thirds of his life here involved in many Groton community affairs. He then submitted his family record to GHS.

Reluctance of people with Groton family connections to provide family information leaves many holes in GHS family records. Some have been filled in with obituaries published in local papers and searching the internet for information about missing persons. Several GHS members have extensive family histories in genealogy programs they have generously shared with GHS. Reg Welch, George Hall, Don Smith, and Stuart Goodwin have shared many records and several others have provided information about additions to their families and relatives that were missing from our records.

The interconnection among Groton families is amazing. I was interested to learn my wife, Celia Darling, was my seventh cousin going back to Jonathan Timothy Bliss (1666-1719) and Miriam Carpenter (1674-1706) as our common ancestors. I also

learned I am third cousin to Reg Welch's mother-in-law with Chester Bliss (1798-1875) as our common ancestor.

Currently grotonvt family file has 115,322 names in the GHS genealogy records and new names are being added as they become available.

WikiTree, Ancestry, Heritage, FamilySearch and other genealogy sites on the internet have large family trees linking families together. But researchers at the University of Oxford have the World's—and history's—largest family tree according to May 2022 American Legion magazine. The research team “combed through eight databases with 3,609 different genome sequences from 215 populations.” Some of the databases had information more than 100,000 years old. The resulting lineage has almost 27 million ancestors. Experts describe this effort as “a major step towards mapping the entire human relationships with a single lineage tracing the ancestry of all people on earth.” In addition, this all-humanity family tree “has widespread implications for medical research,” especially for identifying genetic predictors of disease.

GHS family tree “grotonvt” may never link everyone with Groton connections together, but many are already linked. Few family histories go beyond their immigrant ancestor to America and possibly relationships will be found in more distant ancestors.

Anyone not sure if their parents or grandparents furnished family histories to Waldo Glover or GHS can email a request for their family information in GHS family records to J. Willard Benzie at jwbenzie@mchsi.com for a copy. This will give you an opportunity to add any new information and correct any mistakes that might have been made transcribing original information into the genealogy program.

HISTORY OF ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Henry Martyn Robert, born 2 May 1837 in Robertville, SC, grew up in Ohio, and died 11 May 1923 in Hornell, NY, was son of Reverend Joseph Thomas Robert who later was the first President of Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA. Henry was nominated to West Point from Ohio and graduated fourth in the class of 1857. He was assigned to U. S. Army Corps of Engineers where he served until he retired in 1901 as Brigadier General.

Meetings can be lively, heated, even rancorous affairs, and church meetings are no exception. Twenty-five-year-old Army Engineer Henry Martyn Robert found this out while stationed in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1862-63, recovering from a tropical fever he contracted in Panama. The local Baptist Church asked him to chair a meeting that erupted into open conflict over concerns about local defense. The challenge proved formidable, and Henry became a student of parliamentary procedure.

While it may have been mostly to develop rules to save him from further embarrassment, fate intervened. From 1867 to 1871 he was chief engineer of the Military Division of the Pacific and lived in San Francisco. There he served on the First Baptist Church Board of Trustees and the YMCA Board of Directors. Contentious issues faced the parishioners: Should the pastor or the congregation approve new members? Should women be allowed to vote in business meetings? Should the church move to a more respectable part of town? The church's "Constitution and Rules of Order" guiding conduct of business meetings wasn't comprehensive or precise; one instruction was to "love and be kind to one another." Unfortunately, such admonitions did not prevent rancor, and the poorly drawn guidelines contributed to, rather than diminished, the acrimony.

Mr. Robert's experience at the YMCA further revealed the need. An interdenominational organization like the "Y" was more susceptible to bickering; their records show many disputes over procedural matters and the chair's authority was frequently challenged. Although many of the arguments were petty, he was convinced some sort of parliamentary authority was needed.

He began writing a 16-page parliamentary guide for the societies that he and his wife joined, but decided all organizations and associations needed a generic guide. His transfer to Milwaukee, WI in 1874 delayed pursuing this far more ambitious project, but a harsh winter closed the harbor, and he finished the manuscript in 1875. After two unsuccessful attempts to publish it, he went to a private printer in 1876 to have 4,000

copies printed at his expense. The 176-page Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies could be carried in a coat pocket, ready for easy reference. Henry Robert solicited letters and comments and, in response, revised his manual to include a section dealing with practical matters such as scheduling meetings and preparation of agendas and a section on legal rights of assemblies and procedures for regulating behavior at meetings. The most complete and most important revision was published in 1915, eight years before his death.

The logic of Robert's Rules of Order, based on experience, not abstract law and custom, proved nearly irresistible. A step-by-step system established a hierarchy of guiding principles that ensured order while protecting and advancing democratic principles. Other parliamentary guides fell into disuse by the beginning of the twentieth century, as his Rules of Order gained nearly universal favor.

Most of the 1.5 million non-profit organizations nationally claim to use Robert's Rules of Order, but many either don't understand them or don't use them correctly. But, Robert's Rules of Order has withstood the test of time and is generally specified in most non-profit organizations bylaws .

Henry M. Robert's professional life was long and distinguished. He served as superintending engineer on various parts of the Great Lakes and as engineer of the 4th and 13th lighthouse districts, as Engineer Commissioner in the District of Columbia, Nashville District Engineer, Division Engineer in the Northwest and Southwest Divisions, and at the end of his career as Chief of Engineers. After retirement he chaired a board of engineers who designed the Galveston seawall following the disastrous hurricane of 1900.

He was a man of high moral character, religious conviction, and scientific commitment. His Rules of Order reflect these characteristics. He optimistically presumed that middle-class Christian virtue ensures the emergence of a worthy "general will" once they got through superficial procedural issues. Subsequent decades have severely challenged Robert's optimism. No doubt his manual will remain in the parliamentarian's coat pocket for a long time.

Source: "Robert and His Rules" American Legion Magazine July 2022 and information on the internet about Henry M. Robert. editor

LANDING ON THE MOON 53 YEARS AGO

J. Willard Benzie

On July 20, 1969, I was at Boy Scout Camp Wichinigan in northeastern Minnesota with several scouts from troop 41, including my three sons, Jack, Dan and Mark, when American astronauts in spaceship Apollo 11 landed on the moon. The staff had gathered enough extension cords for electricity from the camp office, about 100 yards away, and a makeshift antenna received the TV signal at our mid-week campfire, so we all watched live television of Neil Armstrong stepping onto the Moon.

Eight years earlier, America was trailing behind the Soviet Union in space exploration. President John F. Kennedy speaking to a joint session of Congress in May 1961 said America needed to commit itself to putting a man on the moon before the decade was out. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, known as NASA, immediately began expedited work on America's Space program. Despite Setbacks in 1967, when three astronauts were killed in a launch pad fire, by 1968 Apollo 7 had completed a successful orbit of the earth. They had also tested several new systems crucial to a future moon landing.

By July 1969, NASA was ready to attempt a moon landing and the Astronauts of Apollo 11 were the ones that did it. Taking off on July 16, they travelled 240,000 miles before beginning an orbit of the moon on July 19. The next day, July 20, Astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong, in a detachable lunar module called the Eagle, touched down in the Sea of Tranquility at 4:18 p.m. They immediately transmitted the message to control center, "The Eagle has landed." Later that night, at 10:39 Neil Armstrong opened the hatch and climbed down the ladder of the module. Then, with a television camera watching, he took a single step onto the surface, and spoke his now famous words, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

REMOTE WORK PARADIGM?

From story in spring 2022 AAA Living magazine

The covid pandemic and advances in communication technology has changed the way many people performed their work over the last couple of years. If you can use your knowledge, skill, and ability to do your job and submit it to your employer or customer without being in the workplace, you might be able to 'work from wherever' (WFW).

A Pew Research Center survey showed before 2020 about 20 percent of the people worked from home all or most of the time. Now 71 percent of the workers surveyed are doing their job from home all or most of the time, and they're learning working remotely opens a world of possibilities.

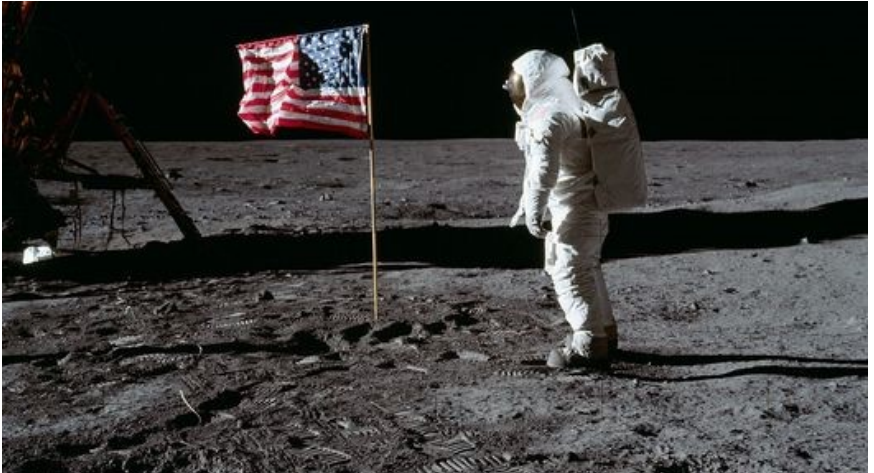
For some people not being tied to a workplace means living in a place they love. Anyplace can be home when there is no commute to the job. For others it is an opportunity to live in two locations, spending summers in the north and winters in the south, and WFW.

There are lots of advantages to not being tied to a specific place by your job. Some are competing for the highest paying jobs with a larger number of employers, living in a location with a lower cost of living, living near family, being able to relocate with a spouse who has a job requiring frequent moves, living in a place you enjoy, and setting your own schedule.

Businesses of all sizes are making it possible for some employees to live where they want, but there are some things one needs to consider. Differences in times zones may mean very early or late times to contact people at the business location and less time to collaborate during work hours. Working far from the job site means you will be depending on technology to keep you connected. You will need reliable high speed internet service, and you may need to be your own IT support when technical problems arise. Isolation could be a problem making it harder to collaborate with your coworkers. When there is no need to physically be located near the business, you will be competing for jobs with a much larger pool of equally qualified workers.

Although the shift to a remote workforce will have a profound impact on urban economies, transportation and more, the idea of living someplace totally untethered to a central workplace has a very strong appeal. Who doesn't want a job that allows them to live and work from anywhere?

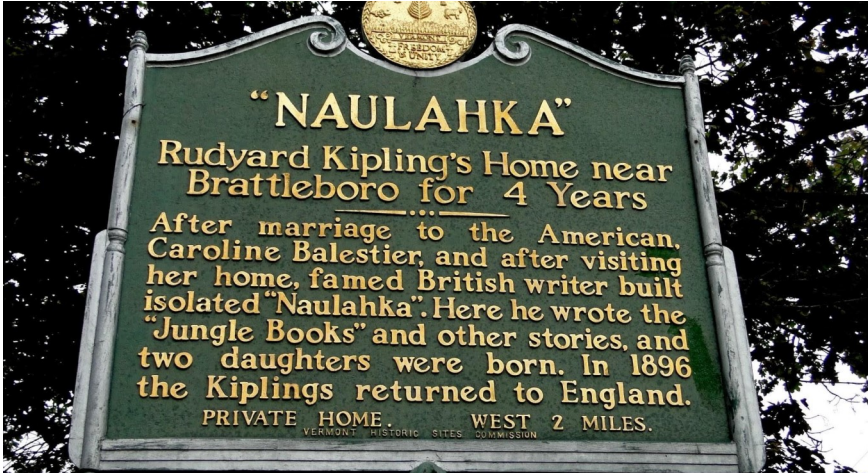
PHOTOS



Astronaut Neil Armstrong on the Moon July 20, 1969.
Image-Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons



Welch Family Reunion Aug. 12, 1908 Groton, VT



Historic Marker remembering Rudyard Kipling living in Vermont.
Posted on Facebook by Howard Longway



Old Groton Cemetery June 2022.

FEUDALISM TO FREEDOM AND BACK? J. Willard Benzie

Roman occupation of the British Isle ended in the fourth century and individuals were bonded in tribes by kinship, area identification, or religion rather than land ownership. In 1066 William of Normandy conquered all seven English kingdoms becoming King William I. Feudalism centralized governance under the conquering over-ruler with regions paying allegiance to the king by providing fighters and funds in return for protection

In the first and second millennium when peasant farmers (crofters) were tenants on lands held by Barons in Scotland, home of my paternal ancestors, taxes were collected by a Baillie in charge of each burgh. Baillie's answered to Barons responsible to Earls or Lords to provide fighting men and financial support to protect the land and the Kingdom. Lords appointed by the King collected from Barons, who collected from Ballies, who collected from peasants. In the feudal system all land was owned by the King and all nobles (Lords, knights, Earls, Barons etc.) and other tenants merely "held" land from the king, who was at the top of the "feudal pyramid".

The earliest Benzie family I have found was Farmer Benzie and his eleven sons who fought at the Battle of Inverurie in 1308 for Robert de Bruce, King of Scotland. He rewarded them by dividing Inverurie lands among them which are still sometimes referred to as twelfth part lands.

In 1620 the first successful English colony was established in America following earlier failures. For more than 150 years the King taxed the colonies until they rebelled in 1776 and formed the United States of America with the goal of liberty and justice for all. Leaders were elected by the people to govern instead of appointed by Royalty.

My ancestor, William Benzie (1720-1785), who has not yet been connected with Farmer Benzie through his sons, was a farmer in Inch Parish (Burgh) at Coldwell farm only a few miles away from Inverurie. An oral tradition is the Benzie family lived in the forests back of Mt. Bennachie (Ben-ah-he) near Inch, before the battle of Harlow in 1411 in which they fought. This tradition is supported by J. R. Douglas' poem titled 'The Benzie Howe' and here is the first of twenty five verses:

Would you like to hear of the Benzie land

Twenty-four miles from the sea.

Where Gadie runs amongst broom and whins

At the back of Bennachie.

The poem continues describing eleven men who probably paid taxes to

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the Baillie of Bennachie, Earl of Garioch, and the King.

My Great Grandfather, John Mitchell Benzie (1835-1909) came to America in 1878 with his family, settling in Quincy, MA where he worked in the granite industry. My Grandfather, John Benzie (1856-1930) also worked in the granite industry at Fox Island, ME; Quincy, MA; Barre, VT; and North Haverhill, NH before establishing his own granite memorial business, M. T. Benzie & Co., in 1898 at Groton, VT where he employed a crew of about two dozen workers including E. J. Raymond, who carved some of the statues in the Groton cemetery.

After World War I the granite industry along with most others were dealing with labor unions organizing workers to negotiate with employers for better working conditions and higher wages. Often with strikes and violence turning employees and employers into adversaries instead of partners and reminding a lot of World War I veterans how the Socialist (Communist) Party in Russia took over businesses and control of the government in their revolution led by Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Workers were forced to pay dues to union organizers to keep their jobs, similar to tenant farmers of old paying taxes to the King through the Baillie, Barons, and Earls or Lords for protection.

American political parties took sides pitting employees against employers and began taxing businesses like individuals. So businesses became 'tax collectors' with a hidden tax from customers in higher prices for goods and services. Politicians convinced employees taxing businesses kept their taxes lower and many never realized they were paying the business tax in higher prices for everything they bought.

The 'roaring 20's followed World War I until the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression of the 30's left many without jobs. Money was scarce and government struggled with work programs until 1941 when World War II brought an end to the depression. With men drafted into military service, women were recruited into the work force to help the war effort and a new paradigm of family living began.

During World War II the Chinese communist party took advantage of National China's concentration on defending their country against Japan, and took over the government like the Russian revolution did in World War I, and Chiang Kai Shek with his followers fled to Taiwan.

Our founders principals for the people to rule themselves is again threatened with career politicians acting like the nobility ruling class taxing individuals through businesses, merchants and landlords. Citizen legislators and executives, with limited tenure, truly representing the population are needed to ensure freedom from a dominating ruling class influenced by unscrupulous lobbyists, leading to corruption.

A New Look at Neanderthals

From several internet news stories

Neanderthals were cave-dwelling hunter-gatherer hominids living in Europe, before going extinct about 30,000 years ago. Why they went extinct is still unknown. Perhaps they died off due to competition with Homo Sapiens for scarce resources. Perhaps it had nothing to do with Homo Sapiens. We really don't know. But in 2010 a team of scientists discovered, Neanderthals are not as extinct as previously thought.

DNA analysis found that Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens interbred about 50,000 years ago, something scientists had once believed impossible. Neanderthal DNA is found in all existing non-sub-Saharan African human populations. And it is estimated that 1-4% of the non-African human genome is derived from Neanderthals, with East Asians having the most Neanderthal genetics (10-20% more than Europeans). The Neanderthal DNA is expressed primarily in the hair, skin, and viral disease-resistance of those who have it. Estimates are that about 20% of Neanderthal DNA survives in modern humans.

The Neanderthal population never exceeded several thousand, and their lives were typically nasty, brutish, and short. Studies of fossils show about 80% of Neanderthals died before the age of 40, and nearly all the fossils discovered show evidence of injuries caused by violence (either from fighting each other, from fighting Homo Sapiens, or from fighting animals).

Despite their difficult trauma-filled lives, scientists believe evidence of their tool-making and social behaviors shows the old characterization of Neanderthals as stupid, knuckle-dragging cavemen is incorrect, and they in fact were significantly more advanced than previously believed, perhaps even having a spoken language.

Georgia Guidestones 1980-2022 Update

See story in Winter 2022 GHS Newsletter about Georgia Guidestones. On July 6, 2022, about 4:00 a.m. an explosion destroyed the Swahili/Hindi language slab of the Georgia Guidestones and caused significant damage to the capstone. The remaining stones were taken down by authorities later that day for safety reasons, according to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. *The Elberton Star* reported that no evidence was found a time capsule had been buried beneath the Georgia Guidestones. *Wikipedia*

DANDELION VALUES

The ubiquitous dandelion known as a weed to most people has values that are overlooked by many. The blossoms provide nectar for bees to make honey and for people to make wine. During World War II the government had a program to make synthetic rubber from dandelion due to the shortage of natural rubber. Thanks to Cheryl Batson, Master Naturalist, for sharing how to forage for dandelions and some tasty ways to enjoy them published in the summer 2022 Minnesota Woodlands newsletter.

Spring through September is the harvest season for the versatile dandelion, an herb imported from Europe. All parts of it are edible; but make sure the harvest area has not been treated with harmful chemicals. Healthline states dandelion is high in vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, folate, calcium, and vitamin K. As with any new food, eat in small amounts to be sure you are not allergic, and ask your doctor before eating any wild food when you are pregnant or have any medical conditions. Dandelions can thin the blood due to vitamin K and possibly lower blood sugar to some extent.

Most people can identify dandelions. However, sometimes the dandelion is confused with the yellow hawkweed family. This should not be difficult if you pay attention to the shape of the leaves and the width of the petals of hawkweed, and length of the flower stem in its mature form.

Many people will eat dandelion leaves all season long. However, the young leaves harvested in shady areas before the flower buds open are the least bitter. Simply harvest young leaves and put directly in a salad mixed with other greens of your choice. The more bitter leaves typically are boiled and eaten like spinach.

One of my favorite ways to use dandelion flowers is to snip them off early in the morning and wash them free of any dirt and insects in a colander. Pour two cups of boiling water over five flower heads and let steep 10 to 15 minutes. If you wish, add 1 tablespoon of lime and a little honey or sugar. You can also refrigerate and have as iced tea.

Dandelion root coffee makes a close substitute for real coffee without the caffeine. Harvest the roots, scrub them free of dirt, and let them dry overnight or until they are brittle. Chop them into small pieces about a half inch long. Cook in an oven heated to 350 degrees Fahrenheit until you notice a smoky aroma – around 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the thickness of your roots. Put 1 or 2 tablespoons of roots in a tea ball. Boil in water 10-15 minutes and enjoy!

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Deborah Jurist, President

End of the summer found GHS members busy planning and preparing for the August 27th Open House “Researching History of Your Groton Property”. About 100 people attended the event. Many were new folks who had never been to the Peter Paul House and who were able to find their houses on the old maps and the historic register of old buildings done by Vermont in the 1980’s and spent time with Reg Welch who helped them discover more about previous owners of their properties using his genealogy data base.

Please check out <https://grotonvthistory.org/learn-about-groton/> for new postings of maps, stories about houses in Groton, and a new chapter summary of Mr. Glover’s Groton. Special thanks to Sarah Spira for updating the website with so much information and giving it a beautiful facelift.

Thanks to so many GHS members who vacuumed, cleaned the bathroom, dusted away a year’s worth of cobwebs, washed windows, set up the “map room,” and the signs, fixed the ramp, and had maps and documents laminated.

Special thanks go out to Dwaine and Susan Pelkey Smith who replaced and painted the threshold of the main entrance to the Peter Paul House.

This edition of the Newsletter is the last one produced by our longtime editor John Willard Benzie, who was first listed as the editor in the Fall of 1999! There is no way to express the fullness of our gratitude to Willard for the 23 years of dedicated work he has devoted to keeping our Groton community involved and informed about the history of our town. We can be thankful, however, that he has promised to begin his own family memoir and will continue to update and share the genealogy data base. He can be reached via email at jwbenzie@mchsi.com

Going forward a new member, Louise Reynolds, will lead and collaborate with a team of members to produce our beloved newsletter. She is a retired journalism educator, with a special love of old cemeteries, and lives on the Groton State Forest Road.

Please reach out to us at grotonvthistory@gmail.com if you have thoughts or suggestions about the newsletter going forward.

OPEN HOUSE PHOTOS

By Deborah Jurist and Janet Putter



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