
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

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Winter 2023

HOMECOMING:

Stories of the town's persistent pull

Part Two

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LOUISE REYNOLDS

What does it mean to come “home”? For Alissa Smith and Willard Benzie, featured in our last issue, “homecoming” signified returning to their origins, to a deeply familiar place, to their family and their community. None of the four people featured in the second part of

this story is actually from Groton, and only one has family roots there. One has never lived here and still doesn't. But Bill Dix, Julie Paton, Patrick Ayer and Terry Bessette chose to tell readers what it is that's made Groton feel like a “home.” Here are their stories.



Bill Dix remembers summer vacations at Sunrise Camp

Though Bill Dix, now residing in Noblesville, Indiana, never lived in Groton, it certainly felt—and feels—like home to him. In answer to our request for Groton “homecoming” stories, Bill wrote, “Of all the things I do not remember, what I do remember is my yearly vacations at Sunrise Camp on Groton Pond.”

Bill's father, Matthew Willard Dix, and his friend Murray Clark built Sunrise at the north end of the pond as a fishing camp in the 1920's. Bill's first visit to Sunrise was at age 2, in 1933. He and his family would have waited at “Gale's Landing” for a “taxi ride” to camp, because there was no road access until the Civilian Conservation Corps built the facilities at Stillwater State Park around 1938.

Along with the Clarks, the Dix family shared the camp with Bill's Aunt Theresa and her husband, Harvey Averill, and

their two daughters, Mary and Althea.

Bill remembers vacations at Groton Pond every summer during his father's two-week vacation from the Singer Sewing Machine company in Massachusetts. Except for the War, when their annual trip was interrupted, they went for about 15 years. “It was heaven for us kids,” Bill writes. You can find Bill in the picture above, on the right, next to his brother, Bobby Dix and their cousin, Mary Averill (Dolan).

Sunrise would be filled each summer with family and friends—the Averills, the Clarks and the Dix's. Bill's grandmother, Hattie Dix, and Murray's wife, Clara Clark, enjoyed their spot on the Pond, as well as the two heavy rowboats—one blue and one green—their husbands built. Bill remembers “they spent a good part of the summer at camp, fishing.”

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MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION DRIVE

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Annual Membership \$25.00
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President's Report Winter 2023

The Peter Paul House is decorated for the holidays and tucked in for the winter, but that doesn't mean lots of fun work isn't still happening in the GHS world. Folks are writing, researching, looking at old photos, and cleaning out closets. If YOU find anything Groton related, please let us know!

Three GHS members that we know of passed away in 2023. I acknowledged George Hall here in the President's Report in the Fall. In this issue we have appreciation pieces for Diane Kreis and David Puffer on page 8.

The oil painting on the right is titled "Otis Glover Ascends the East Field" by Deborah Jurist - 1997. It is the depiction of an encounter I had with a man in a black coat who seems to inhabit the old Glover Farm. David Puffer saw him as well.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that I thank you for your support of the GHS in the past year. Preserving Groton's history for our children and grandchildren in a way that's fun, accessible and responsible is our mission. It takes a team effort, each member contributing based on their expertise.

We are looking towards 2024 as a year of improving the



preservation of our beloved collection of Groton artifacts, family histories, and unique personal stories.

Please join us in any way that suits your own personal interest in the history of our dear town.

Here's to 2024!
Deborah Jurist, President

Collection Feature: Traverse Sled 'Things could get messy...' but FUN

LOUISE REYNOLDS

The long wooden sled—a traverse—that resides in the Peter Paul house has its origin in the sleds fashioned by the Abenaki People, who attached a wooden platform onto bone or wooden runners to transport meat and hides during the snowy winter months in northern New England. In fact, the word "toboggan" evolved from the Abenaki word for "sled": Od8b8ganek. (The "8" signifies a nasal "o" pronunciation.)

Although the sled pictured here was used strictly for recreational purposes, farmers and townspeople relied on traverses to carry heavy loads. Along with bobsleds, a lumber wagon and a "pung sled" (a simple box-like sled), an October, 1925 edition of The Groton Times featured advertisements for a one- and a two-horse, and even an ox-drawn traverse sled for sale at auction.

This size traverse, however, was specifically intended for boys and girls (mostly boys) of all ages to use for sliding



The traverse sled pictured here is similar to—but smaller—than the "town traverse" many older residents of Groton enjoyed. The sled was capable of carrying a very considerable number of snugly packed riders with tremendous momentum."

down the many hills around Groton Village. The construction of the traverse sled for play, rather than work, became widespread in this area beginning in the 1850's, the Times Argus reports.

The traverse—pronounced "travis" by Vermonters—consisted of a long wooden plank atop two separate sleds. The runners of the forward piece steered the sled, while the runners on the back sled were fixed in place. Sliders, called "coasters" in the early days, seated themselves in a tight line on the central, fixed plank and held onto the rails on each side. The traverse was a precursor to the bobsled, and its size meant coasters often relied on a horse to pull the heavy sled back up a long, steep hill. With children, adults and horses making their way up a hill, and coasters coming down, things could get messy.

In his town history, captured in the Times Argus story, St. Johnsbury's Edward Fairbanks described the traverse sled: "...Being anywhere from six to ten feet in length its smooth or cushioned seat was capable of carrying a very considerable number of snugly packed riders with tremendous momentum either to a gentle pause at the terminal, or to a triumphant catastrophe somewhere on the way."

And catastrophes there were.

From the town news portion of The Groton Times, Feb. 22, 1906:

Marion, the little daughter of Oscar Hatch, met with a painful accident the first of the week while coasting, receiving

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“Homecoming,” *cont.*

Bill adds, “Climbing the mountain, chopping wood for the stove, the spring with its pure cold water and meeting the train all are vivid in my mind. Beside swimming and rowing the boat, we kids used to pound small rocks with large rocks to make sand. Nutty?” Probably not so nutty to any adult who remembers playing on the shore of a lake as a child.

Although Bill Dix never really “lived” in Groton, these photos, and his memories, offer a wonderful sort of homecoming. As Bill writes, “At 91 years old, I don’t expect to return there, but will still have those happy memories.”



The Dix, Averill and Clark families vacationed at their camp, “Sunrise,” at the north end of Groton Pond for many years. Clockwise from top: Family reunion at Sunrise, circa 1938. Bob Dix and Mary Averill in their “rickety” boat with the homemade sail. Family waiting at “Gale’s Landing” for a ride to camp, circa 1935.



From cozy cabin to house with a view

Terry Bessette grew up in Berlin, Vermont, not too far from Groton. In 1984, she and her husband purchased a log home on the Goodfellow Road. The move was appealing: the lot was easily accessed, but private, and the town felt a bit like home already, since Terry’s husband’s grandfather had owned a camp on Fuller Hill Road.

The house was nice, and cozy, but “cozy” proved too small for the couple and their three children, so five years later they sold the cabin and moved into the former Legare property on Scott Highway, just over the line in South Ryegate. Eight years after that, following some “life changes,” Terry moved back over the Groton line to Minard Hill Road, into Lizzie Page’s former home. Her neighbors, Dolly and Allen Gandin had told her the house was available, and they took her under their wing. Terry says they were “good people... I miss that they are both gone now.”

The following year, in 1998, Terry remarried and moved back to Berlin. Her youngest daughter and her son-in-law purchased the Minard Hill house from Terry; they live there still, with their four children.



Terry Bessette’s first home in Groton was a log house, where she lived with her first husband and three children. Later, she lived in the former Legare house on 302, and then the house below on Minard Hill Road. Today, she lives in Diane Kreis’ former home on 302.



When Terry’s husband passed away in 2017, she found herself wanting to be closer to her children—her daughter, in Groton, and her son and his family in North Haverhill. Her older daughter moved to Florida years ago; “She will never return to Vermont,” Terry says.

So Terry came “home.” Today, she lives about half a mile up the road from the old Legare house, in the house she bought from Diane Kreis after Diane’s husband, Dick, passed away. Although she doesn’t have the same connections she made when the kids were young and she made friends through their many activities, she says there’s a slower pace here, and she’s grateful for that.

She’d always admired Diane and Dick’s house; now she likes sitting in the sunroom on the back of the house, looking out at the view: river and field; the mountain looming over all.

Her children and grandchildren have busy lives, but they’re there should she need them—and she’s there for them, too. It’s easier than having the long ride over 302 to Berlin. Terry is happy to be back in Groton, “being out in the country more—not the hustle and bustle of living near businesses and a larger population... more cars, etc.”

She’s happy to run into people she hasn’t seen for a while at the grocery store or the recycling center or BMU. And she particularly likes that her daughter beeps the horn every time they pass by to say “Hi!”

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“Homecoming,” *cont.*

Julie Paton wanted to come home

Until she moved to Groton in 2015, Julie Page Paton had only visited the town where her family was from; although she’d stayed for long stretches, it was never her primary residence. But Groton was never far from her heart, and after a career as a chemist and a computer scientist with an impressive resume, she and her husband, Bill, followed their hearts and headed “home.”

Julie and her sister grew up in Winooski, where their father, Howard Page, was a surgeon. He had grown up in Groton; her mother grew up in Ryegate. Julie’s grandmother on her mother’s side, Josephine Etta Brown Doe, lived with Grandpa Russ in a white house on 302 and Julie and her family made the trip from Winooski to “Grammy Jo’s” often.

As a toddler, Julie would help milk the cows and play with the barn cats that loved to hide behind Grammy’s wood cookstove. Grammy always had homemade donuts in her freezer. She would feed the chickadees by skewering a donut on a stick, which she mounted in a window box. Eventually, the chickadees would fly right into the kitchen when Grammy put a donut on the kitchen table. Christmas was a huge family affair, with dinner on the beautiful glassed-in porch and traverse sled rides down the hill in back of the house.

Summer was even better. The Page family owned a few camps on Groton Pond, clustered together on Bealine Drive. Before her mother and father married, Julie’s mother and her father’s sister had pooled their funds to buy an old logging camp at the foot of the pond, moving it to the north end, back a bit from the water.

When Julie was a child, the camp didn’t have running water. Drinking water came from the spring a short walk away, and an outhouse served for bathroom needs. Because the road around the lake didn’t go as far as their camp, the family would stop at the Forest Store and hit the car horn—two long and two short honks was the Page signal. Someone would come over in a boat, and they would load it with everything they needed for the weekend.

The long, narrow building slept



Julie Page Paton’s family was from Groton and Ryegate, and she visited her “Grammy Jo and Grandpa Russ” often in this house. At Christmas time, the family would have dinner on the glassed in porch and go sliding on the traverse down the long hill in the back.

about 20, with a big kitchen and living room, and Julie remembers it as full of family and friends. They had a raft with a diving tower, an old rowboat for fishing, and a canoe, and when Julie was older, she learned—like many of the Pond kids—to waterski from Johnny Desilets, who was a champion water skier. At night, there were bonfires on the beach.

Julie graduated from Winooski High School and attended Middlebury College, which she says was, “close enough to home, but far away enough to keep my parents off my back.” There, she studied chemistry. Her Middlebury education was cut short after she fell in love with Bill Paton, her lab instructor. He finished his graduate degree as she completed her sophomore year, and they married in 1970 and moved to St. Louis. There, Julie continued her undergraduate studies and Bill earned his PhD. Their first child, Jim, was two the year she finished her Master’s degree in chemistry.

Julie’s career was a varied and expansive one: in St. Louis, working as a synthetic organic chemist for Monsanto, she patented a device for her colleagues to conduct gas chromatographs. She also taught herself Stanford’s artificial intelligence language, SAIL.

In 1979, when the family moved to

Massachusetts, where they would live for 23 years, she used that knowledge to write a program that helped scientists at her company search for and retrieve data more efficiently. Later, she used her coding skills to write a program for regulators to track Chrysler’s nationwide car inventory after it received a \$1.5 billion, federally guaranteed bailout. There were more job changes and moves in their future, and Julie and Bill and their daughter, Elizabeth, eventually moved to Huntington Beach, California, where Julie retired from the Boeing Company in 2014.

Throughout all of their travels, Groton’s pull remained strong. Julie calls the Pond an “anchor.” When they lived in Massachusetts, Julie and Bill would pack the car on summer Thursdays, work a half day on Friday, and drive up with their two children, staying until mid-day on Monday. They always spent the month of August there. This remained their routine until they moved to California.

Just a few years after Julie retired, she came east to sing at the memorial service of a friend. It was a beautiful spring day in May, and as they were driving, Julie said, “Bill, I want to come home.” Bill had a five-year time frame

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“Homecoming,” *cont.*

for returning to Groton; she said, “No; I want to come back now.” So they sold their house in California and stayed with their daughter in St. Louis until they could turn on the water in their cabin on the Pond. That was eight years ago.

Today, they live in a large, pleasant house on Scott Highway. Their toehold on the Pond is an old hunting camp Julie’s dad bought that they’ve renovated—but not so much that it doesn’t bring back the past. Any regrets about this big move? No. She says the Los Angeles area was “too many people and too hectic.” And she calls the weather “boring,” noting, “It’s nice to have a rainy day where you can just read a book... I just got claustrophobic; there were too many people out there.”

Julie is a devoted member of the Groton Methodist Church, where she is actively involved with church projects and sings in the choir. She’s used her programming experience in her volunteer work at the Groton Free Public Li-



Julie Paton (back row, third from right) volunteers with the Groton United Methodist Church, where she’s kept records for the Lunches With Friends program, and sings with the choir, among other activities.

brary, where Librarian Sarah Spira credits her for streamlining the process for collecting statistics and compiling data for the library’s annual report to the state. Visitors can find Julie at the circulation desk on Wednesdays and leading the Crafts & Conversation program the first

Saturday of every month when she’s in town. Sarah says the library is “so lucky...to have community members who are willing to share their time and talents.”

Julie says, “I’m glad we came back.”

Patrick Ayer finds meaning in the community and beauty in the Groton Woods



Patrick Ayer grew up in St. Johnsbury. An only child, he was close to his aunt and uncle, Judy and Harry Chandler, who lived out on North County Road. Sometimes he would visit the Chandlers with his parents just for an afternoon, sometimes for a few days. Though his cousins were about 20 years older than Patrick, some of his favorite

times took place at the Chandler home, either a quiet evening or a large gathering of family and friends.

On the North County Road, where the Chandlers owned an expanse of land, Patrick was drawn to the outdoors—the woods, brooks, fields and ponds. He loved the landscape.

When he was 26, Patrick left his home state. He writes, “I left Vermont

because I needed some adventure and a change of pace. I wanted to see some new places and maybe learn a thing or two along the way.” He lived for a period in Alaska, but most of the time he was in southwest Montana. “When I left I was pretty sure I’d be back in a year or so, but I got sidetracked and was gone for 15 years.”

Last December Patrick returned, with the aim of spending more time with his family. Again, he was looking for a change in life, “a way of life that felt more meaningful, and a stronger sense of community.” Remote work meant he could keep the job he cares very much about. “It seemed like a good time to make the change happen.”

He bought a beautiful home and property just up the road from Harry and Judy’s place. Perhaps it was karma—he remembers doing some exploring and hunting on that land long before the house was there. He calls himself, “very fortunate.”

“Traverse,” *cont.*

a compound fracture of a leg. Dr. Eastman reduced the fracture and the little Miss is doing well.

Also that month, in South Ryegate, the Times reported,

Raymond Beaton was quite seriously injured in a coasting accident last Friday night. He was thrown from a traverse sled while coasting down Cowie hill and was unconscious for several hours but seems to be all right now.”

Still, coasting became tremendously popular as a winter activity. Because snow was rolled, rather than plowed on the hilly streets of Vermont, towns offered coasters a long, smooth, and often dangerous slide. In Burlington, coasting after dark was popular, perhaps because there was less traffic. City officials raised alarms about sliders in the dark colliding with pedestrians and horse-drawn traffic, particularly the city’s new trolley.

In his blog, “In Times Past,” Bradford historian Larry Coffin writes,

Beginning in the 1860s, newspaper reports regularly reported accidents be-



This illustration appeared in the January, 2022 Vermont Digger article on Burlington’s Winter Carnival of 1886. The article noted that a large traverse could reach speeds of up to 60 miles an hour on a long, steep downhill. The photo is from the Silver Special Collections Library of the University of Vermont.

tween coasters and pedestrians, horses, utility poles, barbed wire, railroad cars, and vehicles.

While some communities set aside designated streets for sliding, others began to restrict it. In Dec. 1869, believing ‘the practice of coasting upon the Highways of Bradford Village is alike dangerous to life and property,’ Bradford select-

men moved to forbid it.

But efforts to stop coasters seem to have been mostly unsuccessful. In its Dec. 23, 1898 edition, The Groton Times reported from Topsham,

Some of the children while coasting seem to take pains to frighten horses. If it continues selectmen will be called upon to stop coasting in the village.

Accidents and laws aside, in Groton, children and grownups have enjoyed a good slide down a long hill for as long as there have been hills—and children.

Here are some of their stories.

Willard Benzie writes,

Our first sleds were Christmas gifts in 1932 from our Uncle Val and Aunt Mildred, who lived in Lincoln, MA, a suburb of Boston. There was a note on the Christmas tree that our gifts were too large to bring down the chimney, so they were left on the roof of the porch. We, of course, believed that Santa had left them there. We ran up to our parents’ bedroom where we could open the windows and go out on the porch roof, where we found four new sleds; one each for me, my sister Ina, my brother Melvin, and his twin sister Marilyn.

Our sliding hill was the incline up to our barn, where we could ride down all the way to Railroad Street. We also liked to slide in our neighbors, Orange and Ella Morrison’s, driveway, which was steeper and longer than ours. Sometimes when the roads were icy we could coast all the way down Railroad Street to Edwards’ Brook (now Keenan Brook).



The Morrison’s hay field also had a depression that held water and melted snow where we could skate on the ice when it froze over. We used our sleds to carry our skates and things to play with on the ice. Our folks were too strict; we were never allowed to go skate on the Wells River above the dam on Mill Road where many of the other kids in the village skated when the ice was thick enough.

I did have one ride on the town traverse when I was a pre-teen late in the 1930’s. A group of us younger boys were

able to get the town traverse before the older boys took charge of it, and we pulled it up Powder Spring Road to the junction with the quarry road and had a ride down to the station flat. By this time the roads were being plowed, so they only had good snow cover for a few days after a snowstorm.

We were always envious of the older boys, who used to go farther up Powder Spring Road to Robert Brown’s farm, and some claimed to coast all the way into the village.

The roads were not plowed until the late 1920’s and early 1930’s. After the roads were plowed regularly and automobile traffic was increasing, the town traverse was seldom used by the youth. A lot of people with automobiles in the early years used to put them away for the winter and used their sleighs for transportation over the snow until the roads were being plowed more often.

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“Sliding,” *cont.*



When Charles Frost was a child, he enjoyed sliding in the fields next to his house, just off Powder Spring Road. He remembers a snow scooter his father made, which was good for sliding “down the road or on crusty snow in the spring,” he writes.

As he got older, he joined the other kids sliding on the town’s traverse sled, which carried about 10 people. Someone with a car would stop traffic on Galusha Hill Road so the kids could ride all the way down to the Frost ball field, then Vern Frost, Jr, Sewell’s father, would drive the traverse back up to the top of Galusha Hill.

Gary Lamberton writes, “When I was a child, and always being up to Camp on Groton Pond, we always went sledding on the long driveway that led up to Deer Horn Lodge, near the south end of Rickers Pond. The lodge was abandoned and the driveway was not plowed; it was very long and you definitely needed a snowmobile to take you to the top. Back then we used the metal runner sleds and always tried to reach the end of the driveway, where the blacktop was plowed

For my children, who are now 25 and 28 years old, the popular sledding hill for plastic toboggan-type sleds was Frost Hill, just off the RR Bed near Powder Spring Road. But we cheated and always went there by snowmobile with a caboose in tow. That way we could give the kids and their friends a ride back up the hill. I sometimes wondered if they enjoyed the ride up the hill over sliding down the hill.

Because of Groton’s topography, folks could have a good ride down hills on either side of the Wells River

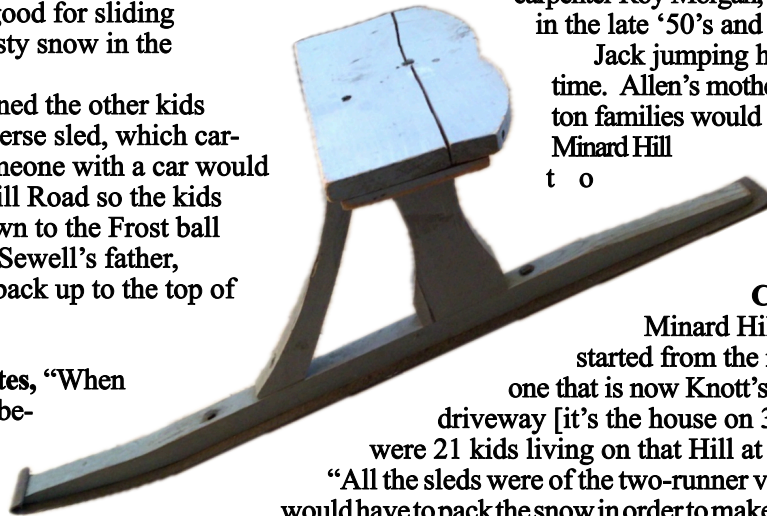
This “jack jumper” sled from the Peter Paul House is similar to the ones Allen Goodine and Charles Frost used. Jack jumpers, mostly home-made, may have first appeared in New England in the mid- to late 1800’s. They were made of a ski-shaped piece of wood or a barrel stave, with a wooden bench attached. The first patent for the sled was issued in 1914.

Jack jumpers are still popular today because they provide a thrilling ride—you have to go fast to keep from tipping over.

Here in Vermont, Mount Snow hosts the Jack Jump World Championship, a slalom event each year in March.

Allen Goodine recalls his “Jack Jumper,” identical to the one pictured here in the Peter Paul House. His was made by local carpenter Roy Morgan, who made several of the scooters in the late ‘50’s and early ‘60’s.

Jack jumping has been popular here for some time. Allen’s mother, Alice Goodine, told him Groton families would start at what is now Mt. Ara, off Minard Hill Road, and travel all the way the village, when the snow was crusty.



Carl Edwards’ family also liked Minard Hill for sliding: “We had a run that started from the right side of the house above the one that is now Knott’s, and ended in my brother Mark’s driveway [it’s the house on 302 with the stone porch]. There were 21 kids living on that Hill at that time.

“All the sleds were of the two-runner variety. If we had a snowstorm we would have to pack the snow in order to make a good run. Sometimes we would line up the sleds in rows and race to the bottom like a Thunder Road event.

“In later years, those plastic sleds became more popular. They were better for packing snow and they were fast. One day my younger brother, myself and cousin (Warren Stewart) were sliding on that hill, but instead of stopping in the driveway, Warren continued down onto Route 302 and struck the rear wheel of a passing tractor trailer. The collision fractured his pelvis. Took him months before he could walk again.”

GHS President Deborah Jurist shared some photos of her family, writing, “Every year since we have lived in Groton, my family gets together to celebrate the Winter Solstice. One of our activities is tobogganing down what we call Waldo’s Hill. Waldo Glover supposedly sat at the top of this hill behind our house, in his later years. Here we are in 2013.



Winter fun from long ago at the Peter Paul House



The Peter Paul House has a collection of skis and skates. These were donated by Aut Morrison.



This little doll sleigh was made for a young girl in the 1920's by George Page, who was a hired man to the girl's grandfather, Jim Smeck.



Skaters on the ice above the dam on the Wells River by Mill Street, ca. 1920's. Photo taken by D.A. Smith.



This runner sled belonged to Raymond Page, who was born in 1907 in Groton. He is the father of Dean Page, and the grandfather of Tom Page.



James Benzie, the father of GHS genealogist Willard Benzie, used this sleigh on his rural delivery route for the U.S. Postal Service in the 1930's. The sleigh was given to the GHS by his son, Melvin Benzie.

In Memoriam



Diane Kreis

Feb. 22, 1940 - May 25, 2023

I did not know Diane Kreis well. By the time I met her she was not in Groton that frequently. We did spend an afternoon together at her beautiful home overlooking the old Railroad Bed, while she helped me prepare an issue of the newsletter for mailing. I learned a lot from her even in that short time. She was a strong, brave woman, who accomplished an enormous amount in her life. She rose all the way to become the National Vice President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Eventually, she came back to her roots.

It was clear how much she loved Groton, even though she had moved away as a toddler and only spent summers "helping" her grandparents make sales behind the counter of their Groton store, Brown's Meats and Groceries. The store was in the brick building next to what was, even then, Groton Garage.

When she moved back to Groton with her husband, Dick, she dove right into community service as a Library

Trustee and Officer in the GHS. She was a generous supporter of both organizations and her experience with the Daughters of the American Revolution was helpful when she participated in the big renovation project that got underway in the early 2000s. In fact, Diane was instrumental in the project which transformed the old Goodine House into Groton Free Public Library.

It is hard to talk about Diane without honoring her Dad, Dale Brown. His research and writing about the history of Groton has provided our community with histories of the Peter Paul House, Park Street, and Bridges among other subjects. He also surveyed roadways and gravesites in what we call the "New Cemetery," which is behind the Old Cemetery on Rt. 302.

I would like to thank Kimberly Stenson for her donation honoring her Mom, and for bringing my attention to Diane's passing.

Before I had the privilege of knowing David/Sam/Benzie Puffer, he rebuilt the chimney for the wood cook stove and the brick fireplace in the basement of the Peter Paul House. I am sure he helped with the restoration of the old house in other ways too, because, as his Mother Janet Puffer said, "If someone asked him to do something, he would do it."

He was one of the most deeply spiritual men I have ever known and had an uncanny sense of the spiritual capacity of place. I know this from experience.

David did a lot of masonry work at our place, the old Glover Farm. He was not just an artist in this work, he was also a teacher. He taught us how to move big stones with straps and how to build a simple stone wall.

One beautiful sunny summer day, I came home from work and he greeted me saying, "I saw an old man in a heavy black coat come up through the field and cross Glover Rd. heading west. He was really booking it, like he was late to get somewhere."



David Puffer

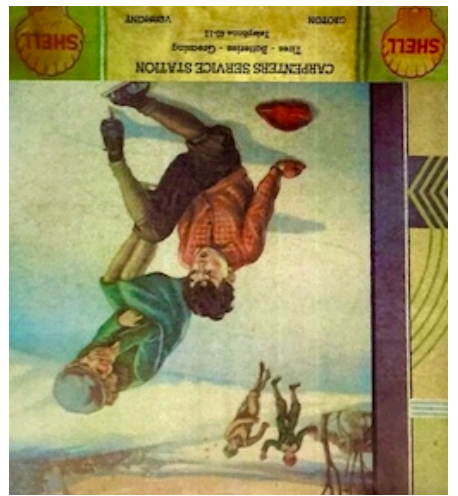
Dec. 31, 1962 - Nov. 9, 2023

David Sam Benzie Puffer wearing his Grandfather William Peck's Buffalo coat. William Peck served in the Civil War.

When I first owned the Glover Farm, I was frequently overcome by a fear that I could not handle the responsibility of restoring and bringing such an historical property into the 21st century. One day, as I was sitting behind the old house, feeling very overwhelmed, I felt the presence of someone approach me. I turned and saw an old man in a heavy black coat and hat walking up through the field towards me. He put his hand on my shoulder and told me I would do fine. Yes, I was a small woman from Massachusetts, but I was connected to the place and I could handle the job.

I am sure that David saw the same man I saw, I think he is one of the Glovers, Otis is my guess, who keeps an eye on the place. I suspect David is keeping an eye on the place now too. His life force transcends death

I would like to thank John Willard Benzie for his generous donation to the GHS in honor of David and for his help, as always, filling in the details of our shared Groton history.



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