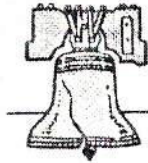


The Groton Historical Society



NEWSLETTER

GROTON VERMONT

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NO. 11



HAPPY BIRTHDAY VERMONT!

Alice Goodine and Norma Hosmer are shown here displaying the large Birthday Cake beautifully decorated with the Bicentennial Logo, which the Groton Historical Society provided for the townspeople at Town Meeting Day, in honor of Vermont's 200th anniversary of statehood.



Homecoming

GROTON SCHOOL "ALL CLASS REUNION"

As part of the Vermont Bicentennial Year Celebration the Groton Historical Society is organizing a big "Homecoming and All Class Reunion" for all those who attended the old Groton School. A committee composed of Josephine French, Peggy Smith, Bing Page and Janet Puffer have been hard at work for several months putting this affair together. They have tried to spread the word by contacting at least one member of each class and having them try to get in touch with their classmates.

The big day is JULY 6, 1991! A full day of visiting, renewing old acquaintances, and reminiscence is planned. A Chicken Barbecue will be served at noon, at the Blue Mountain School Cafeteria. Over 400 people are expected to attend!

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ROAD CONSTRUCTION

(Excerpts from "Mr. Glover's Groton")

It is difficult now to visualize the handicaps of early travel both in respect to the roads and the means of conveyance. The earliest road was a trail; later it was widened so that a yoke of oxen might pass; later still it was so improved that a sturdily-built ox-cart might go over it. This third stage of road building was about as far as the proprietors and early residents of Groton got in their attempt to provide a highway system. It was sufficient for the day, for although the pioneers doubtless dreamed of the time when they would enjoy the luxury of the horse & buggy, they knew very well that they would have to wait. Years of toil and struggle with poverty lay ahead.

How were these early roads made? First the trees had to be felled and the stumps removed. Rocks were thrown to one side or into hollows, and covered with the earth that was removed from the high places in the road. It is doubtful if the earliest roads had any ditches, but in time ditches were made to save the road itself from being washed away, especially on the hillsides. The earth removed from the ditches was of course thrown onto the road itself. As there was a rich coat of humus or top-soil over the entire forest floor, it is easily understandable that the first roads, especially in rainy seasons, were of the consistency of porridge. Early travel therefore was much more easily accomplished in winter when the roads were frozen and the hollows and rough places made more easily passable with a coating of snow. Small streams were forded; wherever a bridge was necessary, abutments were made of heavy field stones. Two or three sturdy hemlock logs were laid over the brook,

their ends well anchored to the abutments; across these stringers poles were so closely laid that no hoof of ox or horse was put in jeopardy. Later the sawmill furnished the luxury of square-edge planks for this purpose. In swampy places logs were laid crosswise, making a road called a causeway or causey, a word known colloquially as "Cassy".

Since in locating roads the town fathers followed the principal that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, they climbed some rather steep hills. Hence when they wanted a road connecting the Southerly Mill Road at Munro's Gate with the the Upper Mill Road at Morrison's house they went straight up Munro's Hill (now Minard Hill), and their descendants have been doing the same thing for more than a century and a half. The Upper Mill Road from Noyes' Mills to Josiah Darling's at the Ryegate line was an up-down route on which five hill-ranges were scaled.

As time went on roads were improved to meet the necessity of horse and carriage, but it was probably well into the second decade of the century before roads were passable by any means except ox-teams or saddle horse.

This condition was not typical of Groton alone.

(Next time; Road Maintenance)

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QUILTERS

"QUILT 251"

The goal of the Bicentennial Committee is to receive a block from each of Vermont's 251 Towns. these blocks will then be combined into a quilt of each County.

Robin Edwards of Groton is co-ordinating Caledonia and Orange County blocks. The quilt will be displayed at the Heart of New England Quilt Show on July 27-28 at the Bradford Armory.

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