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# GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Newsletter

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## ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

### *“THE WAR THAT CHANGED THE WORLD”*

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In the summer of 1914 the assassination of the Archduke of Austria triggered the start of World War I. The crisis came after a long and difficult series of miscalculations by political leaders in Italy, France, Germany, Britain, Austria-Hungary and Russia over European and colonial issues that left tensions high in the decade before 1914.

These diplomatic clashes date back to changes in the balance of power in Europe. But the more immediate cause for the war was tensions over territory in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary competed with Serbia and Russia for territory and influence in the region and they pulled the rest of the Great Powers into the conflict through their various alliances and treaties.

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Americans had no idea that war was imminent in Europe in the summer of 1914, and tens of thousands of tourists were caught by surprise. The U.S. government, under President Wilson, called for neutrality "in thought and deed". Except for a group of citizens supporting the British, American public opinion went along with it at first. Neutrality was strong among Irish Americans, German Americans, and Swedish Americans, as well as church leaders and women. However, the U. S. opinion soon turned on the German Empire as the villain, after news of atrocities in Belgium in 1914, and sinking of the ship Lusitania in 1915.

President Wilson kept the economy on a peacetime basis, while providing large-scale loans to Britain and France. To avoid making any military threat, he made only minimal preparations for war and kept the army at its small peacetime level, despite increasing demands for preparedness. However, he did enlarge the Navy.

At the beginning of 1917 Germany resumed all-out submarine warfare on all commercial ships headed toward Britain, realizing it would mean war with the United States. Germany also offered a military alliance to Mexico in the Zimmermann Telegram, and its publication outraged Americans just as German submarines started sinking American ships in the North Atlantic. President Wilson asked Congress for "a war to end all wars" that would "make the world safe for democracy", and Congress declared war on April 6, 1917.

Unfortunately the opposite was true, this tragic conflict proved to be only a prelude to what some claim was the bloodiest century mankind has ever known. In the wake of the war, entire empires disappeared. When the war ended on 11 November 1918, a deadly plague,

the Spanish Flu, was already spreading world wide, and its spread was hastened with the return of soldiers to their homelands. By 1923, German currency was practically worthless, and soon the world's economy collapsed causing widespread hardship and starvation. Then in 1939 the second World War began—in some ways a continuation of the first one. Revolutions and strikes seemed to be almost common place during the rest of the century. The world had indeed, changed.

Military personnel from Groton serving during World War I as listed in *Mr. Glover's Groton* are as follows:

Ernest Bailey, Walter Dana, William Dana, Arthur Foley, Frank Foley, Clarence French, George French, Lester Freer, Roy Hanchett, Burton Heath, Waldo Heath, Harvey Hendry, Justin Hook, Ned Lindsey, Wendell Lord, Austin Lund, Frank Mason, Joe McQueen, Henry Merrin, John Moulton, Forrest Nelson, Moses Page, William Page, Gerald Smith, Samuel Thurston, Clarence Tinkham, Clyde Welch, George Willey, Carroll Williams, Leslie Williams, Perley Williams, Sydney Wright. Officers were Edward Bushnell, Nathan Caldwell, Isaac Ricker and Henry Tillotson. Others who served are Dwight Smith, Harold Taylor and Grace Dennis.

Wendell Lord was the only fatality from Groton, and the only one severely wounded was Justin Hook. Another three were slightly wounded; Burton Heath, Forrest Nelson and Clarence Tinkham. A bronze plaque honoring Wendell Lord is in the Methodist Church sanctuary.

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Excerpts from  
**THE CIVIL WAR**  
(As Recollected by an Ordinary Soldier)  
By  
Seth N. Eastman M.D. (1843-1913)

*In observance of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War another excerpt from Dr. S. N. Eastman's story is given here. The first eight excerpts were in previous newsletters covering his enlistment at St. Johnsbury, to the battle with Stonewall Jackson and retreating from the battle to take Fredericksburg trying to interrupt General Lee's invasion of the North.*

The retreat continued and we began the long and weary march that ended at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. The night of July 1st, we encamped at a little town in Maryland called Manchester. At about midnight we were ordered to pack up and start towards Gettysburg. We understood that our army was being driven back and they needed us desperately, so we were hurried along as fast as we could go, all the rest of that night and the next day. About noon we could hear the roar of the cannons in front of us. At about 4 p.m. we arrived and were placed directly across the grave yard on Cemetery Hill, which was the storm center of that great battle. We were very tired as we had marched about 44 miles in 18 hours and the little rest we got in the cemetery was very acceptable. We did not stay long in this place as word came that the rebels were flanking us to the left, and they might take the roads that led to Washington, so we fell in again and marched 3 or 4 miles to the left and took a position near the Round Top to prevent the Rebels from sending their soldiers around us. Here we stayed until the great battle of Gettysburg was over.

From our position we could see General John Pickett's charge on Cemetery Hill. We saw their line form for the charge, saw them advance, and noticed their perfect line. They advanced in 4 lines of battle in perfect formation. This was the flower of the army of northern Virginia. They were all from that state. A grander sight I never saw, or ever expect to again. As they came in range of our artillery, gaps appeared. Their lines were riddled with grape and canister, but still they advanced. Nothing could dismay their splendid courage. They came on and captured the hill as they intended to; but back of the hill lay the 2nd Vermont Brigade

and Hancock's Corps and when they supposed the battle was over, it was only beginning. They were charged by the Union men and driven pell mell down the hill with great slaughter. Three times they made this attempt to break the union's left center, and three times they were routed. All this we saw from the top of Little Round Top Mountain. It was a grand sight and one to never be forgotten.

At this time, I had seen so much service that I was nearly used up. I had a new pair of shoes and they hurt my feet. There was a rough spot on the inside of the sole that had worn the skin off the sole of my feet until they bled. I was so used up that I was unable to walk, and I applied to the surgeon for aid. He examined my feet and said I was unable to walk and gave me a pass that allowed me to ride on the ambulance train. I applied to the officer in charge of the sixth corps and, after examining my papers, he showed me where to ride. As the army was about to start a march against the now retreating rebel army, I began my ride right away. It seemed funny to be riding, as I had never ridden before since joining the army. The train started and I was very glad to be riding. I thought we were going in the same direction as the army, but after one days ride, I found the train was going towards the rear, and we were only 20 miles from Baltimore, Maryland. The train arrived in the city about 5 p. m. The wagon I was in stopped at a very large building and we were carried out and into a waiting room, where a medical officer examined us and sent us to the various wards according to the nature of our disabilities. The wounded were sent into the surgical wards and the sick into the medical wards, but then they came to me, I was sent into a ward where there were others in about the same condition as me. They took my clothes, gave me a bath and a white shirt, and put me to bed. I was ashamed of myself to be in bed, as I was in perfect health except for my feet, and I knew there were still plenty of wounded from the battle of Gettysburg, that were uncared for as yet, but I decided that I could not help that, so immediately fell asleep. The doctor came in the morning to examine the sick, and I told him the truth about how I happened to be there, and instead of being mad, he was very pleasant and ordered a pair of soft stockings and soft slippers for me to wear and he told me I had done the right thing in reporting my condition. This made me feel better and I was not as ashamed after that.

They fed me and I was allowed to sit around the room and rest. There was no one around the room that I had ever seen before, and there were nurses to wait on me and bring me food, and do anything I wanted

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(Continued from page 5)* **civil war**

them to, but I did not feel right to be here and longed to get away, but how to do it I did not know. After about three days, one morning a medical officer came to me and asked me what regiment and company I belonged to, and what the commanding officers name was, and how old I was, and many other questions, as well as how I came to be in the hospital. All these questions I answered and told him the truth. Then, I asked him if I could go to my regiment as my feet had gotten well. He told me I could not go at all, as the hospital I was in was short of help and he had made out a detail and sent it to my regiment, I would be put to work that day, and chances were I would remain in this place during the war. He said, if I obeyed orders and attended to my duties, it was a pleasant job and the work was not hard.

I objected to the proposition saying I would rather be with my regiment, but he said, "You are detailed and under my orders now, and you have no choice in the matter." He said, however, I had been detailed for a nurse and I would be put on a job that day. I made no more objections and that afternoon was assigned to my place of duty. Perhaps a little description of this hospital I was in would not be out of place at this time. It was called the Newton University Hospital. Before the war it was a school building called Newton University, but it had been seized and turned into a hospital, as the need of the Government demanded. There were six houses adjoining it, all just alike, that had been seized at the same time for the same purpose, and the folks who lived in the houses had to go elsewhere to live. This made quite a large institution, the like of which the U. S. Government had many at this time. Otherwise, the sick men of the army could have no care.

Each of these houses had three stories, attic and basement, which were used for sleeping apartments and for baggage. Each had three rooms on each of the three floors. The front doors and halls were all closed and locked and the hospital only used the back doors and the back yards. The ground floor of the main building was used for the officers' quarters and reception rooms and storage. All the upper rooms were used as sick wards. I was put to work that afternoon in house No. 3, on the third floor. I had charge of three rooms, and all were filled with rebel officers from the battle of Gettysburg. This would be about the 10th of July 1863. There were twenty nine of them, all desperately wounded. One rebel general by the name of Winder, died the first night I had charge of the place. I thought I had something to do if I took care of all these men. Several of them died in a few days, and others were removed by their friends, so that in a week or two, there were not more than thirteen or fourteen left, and I got along quite easily after this. There

were no more battles at this time, and we got no more wounded, and not many sick came to us, as it was a hospital for wounded men more than sick. Still, we had many sick men in it. But my work was not very hard, and I became more contented, but I had a longing to see my old comrades of Company B of Vermont, and wanted to go to them. I could get a pass to go out into the city almost every afternoon. This I enjoyed very much. There were many rebels in Baltimore at this time, and we had some scraps with them, but the policemen were all on our side and there was no danger.

About this time, the Government began enlisting Negro soldiers but they had to have white men for officers. There was, at one time, twenty companies of Negro men enlisted and quartered in Fort MacHenry, and not an officer. I had a chance to be a Captain, and the men in charge of the Negro troops urged me earnestly to go and get a commission, but I did not have confidence enough in myself to do so, and then again, I was only nineteen years old, and did not think I was fit to take charge of one hundred men. I have seen the time since then that I was very sorry I did not accept the offer. I heard that the rebels said if they caught a white man in charge of Negro troops, they would hang him and I did not like the sound of this threat, as they did about as they agreed to about such things, and for me to say I was afraid to accept the office in colored troops would be telling the truth. I was afraid to take any part in colored troops, so I let the offer go, and continued at my job of nursing in this hospital, house 3, ward 3.

An amusing incident occurred about this time in the hospital. A rebel spy was captured somewhere in the city and, as he had "fits", he was brought to the hospital, and I had to take care of him. Sometime in the night, he began frothing at the mouth and barking like a dog, and acting like he would bite someone, and I got help and we held him. Not knowing his character, we put straps in his mouth which he would bite, and bite the side out of a tumbler when we offered him a drink. He had spasms at the sight of water. He pretended to have hydrophobia, and we were very much alarmed and held him all night to prevent him from doing himself harm, or biting anybody, and what was our amazement when the doctor came in the next morning and told us it was all fake and shamming, and he was a real rebel spy, and a very dangerous one at that, and sent for a squad of guards and had him sent to prison. I understood he was hung a few days after he had kept us up all night to watch him. He was a slick one and could play tricks on the best of us. But he was hung. I had an invitation to go see him executed, but at that time, I was tender hearted, and did

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**1914—1918**

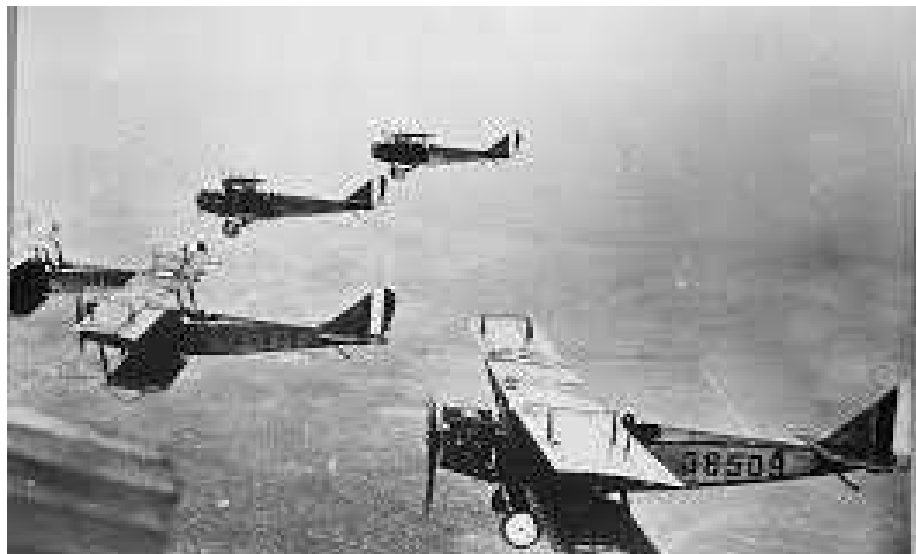


**Archduke Franz Ferdinand and wife just before they were assassinated in 1914 contributing to the start of World War I.**



**Army Truck in World War I**





**First use of Airplanes in War**



**Soldiers Graves in France**

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*(Continued from page 7)* **CIVIL WAR**

not want to see a man hung, so I did not go.

The basement of all these houses comprising this hospital contained much baggage belonging to sick and wounded soldiers who had died. Hundreds of knapsacks, haversacks, musket, canteens, cartridges, boxes and belts and blankets and almost everything that goes to make the outfit of soldiers, and no one knew anything about the owners of the property. So anyone connected with the hospital could have and appropriate any of this stuff to his own use. I took advantage of this chance, and obtained as good an outfit as I could ask for in the form of clothing. These goods cost me nothing, as the owners were either dead or discharged and gone home.

The work in the hospital was one thing over and over, and it became very irksome and unpleasant. I was very much dissatisfied with it and longed to get away and join the Regiment and see my old friends in Company B, 6th Vermont Volunteer Infantry. I tried every scheme I could think of to make the medical officers send me to my company. I was homesick to get away from the hospital, so I concluded to run away, and when a lot of convalescent men were collected to be sent to the front, this was along in October 1863, I got my things and fell in with them. They were being discharged from the hospital, cured, and as I was dressed and had the same baggage and looked and acted the same as the others, no one noticed me, and so I ended my connection with the Newton University Hospital as a nurse, and started for the Front, but the sailing was not as smooth as I had expected. We had to go to a place called a distribution depot at Patterson's Park in Baltimore, where every man was questioned closely as to his destination and where he had come from, and here it was found out that I had left my place without proper leave and the officers said I would have to return to the hospital and get proper release from the detail. This I did not like to do and as I made no objection to what they said, they did not arrest me or detain me in any way and, as there could be nothing criminal in joining my own company, I made up my mind to go along and say no more about it, so when the squad started that was assigned to the 6th Corps, which they did that night, I fell in and went along, knowing if I could get to the 6th Corps I would be safe. Nothing more was said to me by any of the officers, but some of the men that knew the circumstances guyed me not a little about being sent back and receiving some kind of punishment for running away from the hospital, but I kept quiet and said nothing.

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## FAMILIES IN 1840 GROTON CENSUS

New family names in the 1840 census of Groton, who had not been in previous censuses, are listed here. Earlier newsletters listed the family names that first appeared in the 1790 to 1830 census records and they are summarized below. Asterisk\* indicates people not yet listed in GHS family records.

1790 Abbott, Bailey, Darling, Hosmer, James, Morse, Townshend

1800 Alexander, Batchelder, Emery, Frost, Gary, Gray, Hatch, Heath, Hill, Hooper, Knight, Lund, Macomber, Manchester, Martin, Morrison, Munro, Noyes, Phelps, Pollard, Remick, Taisey, Thurston, Welch

1810 Annis, Bennett, Bragden\*, Carter, Emerson, Fisk, Floyd\*, Fuller, Hidden, Hodsdon, Hogin\*, Jenkins, Littlefield\*, Low, Mallory\*, McLaughlin, Nelson, Page, Parker\*, Paul, Renfrew, Rhodes, Roberts, Rowlin\*, Stanley, Vance, Weston, Witcher.

1820 Chase, Coffrin, Cunningham, Downs, Gile, Glover, Goodwin, Higgins, Huggins\*, Lyle, Marshall, McClary, Plummer, Richardson\*, Ricker, Sargent, Welton, Wilmot, Wilson, Wormwood

1830 Bellamy\*, Brown, Burnham, Clark, Dodge, Green, Hall, Kimball, Lathrup\*, Lewis\*, Randall, Rodger\*, Silver, and Vennor.

1840 Brickett\*, Buchanan, Corruth, Culver\*, Divoll\*, Dow, Dunn, Franklin\*, Furwell\*, Gates, Grant, Hadley, Jones\*, Joy, Moulton\*, Orr, Patterson, Peck, Philbrick, Scott, Weld, Wheeler\*, Whitehill, Wood

**Barnard Brickett** is listed in the 1840 census with a family of 6. No further information (NFI) is at GHS on this family.

**James Buchanan** age 20-30 was head of household with another male age 20-30 and a female age 20-30. Believed to be James (1809-1867) and perhaps his brother Matthew, age 29, or John age 25 and James new Bride, Sarah Hale, whom he married in 1839. There are 511 names in the Buchanan family records at GHS.

**Corruth brothers, John**, age 39, **James Jr.**, 37, **William**, 34, and **Peter**, 29, all brought their families to Groton. John with his wife Mary Nelson and 5 children; James Jr. with his wife, Lucy Welton and 3 children; William with his wife, Rebecca Brown and one child; and Peter with his wife, Amy Page, whom he married in 1839. There are 214 names in the Corruth family records at GHS.

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**Lyman Culver**, age 50-60, his wife Fanny Hovey, age 46, a son, Benjamin, age 9, daughters Surrepta age 4, Caroline 12, Fanny 15, and Mary 20. He was a clergyman and the family moved to NH later. NFI at GHS.

**Lucius Divoll** was 30 years old in 1840, married and had a boy under 5 years of age. Name of his wife and son is not in GHS family records.

**William Dow**, age 30-40, with a male under 5 and 3 females 20-30 in the family. William married Lydia Shaw and they and three of their four children are buried in the Groton Village cemetery. There are 9 names in the Dow family records at GHS.

**James Dunn**, age 40, and his brother, **Hugh**, age 35, their wives, Nancy Holmes, age 38, and Joanna Paul, age 45, two sons under the age of 5 in James family, one son under 5 and one 5-10 in Hugh's and their father, John age 66, who was living with Hugh's family. There are 711 names in the Dunn family records at GHS.

**Charity (Slye) Franklin**, age 32, wife (or widow) of John Franklin, with three girls, one under 5 and two 5-10 years old. John was a teacher and physician. NFI at GHS.

**William Furwell**, age 50-60, with 8 people in the family; 5 males and three females, one 90-100 years old, probably his or his wife's mother. Not in GHS family records.

**John Gates**, age 45, three sons ages 2, 6, and 12; and 5 daughters ages 8, 10, 15, 17, and 20 were in the family. His wife, Jennet Holmes, died in March 1840 just before the census was taken. There are 511 names in the Gates family records at GHS.

**William Grant**, age 33, his wife, Finett Nelson, age 23 and their three children; a boy under 5 and a boy and girl 5-10 years old. Grant family has 74 names at GHS.

**Moses Hadley**, age 39, his wife, Janet Abbott, age 35, and their children: Martha, 15, John 12, Phebe 5, and another son under 5. Hadley family has 11 names at GHS.

**John Jones**, age 45, his wife Sarah Orr, 5 of their children and one parent; **William Jones**, age 40-50, his wife age 30-40, and their 5 children. These families went west.

**N. H. Joy**, age 60-70, with one male and one female 30-40, one female 20-30 and two under 5. Not in GHS family records.

**Michael Moulton**, age 20-30, with one female 20-30, and one boy under 5. Michael has not yet been connected to the Moulton family in GHS family records.

**James Orr**, age 36, his wife Peggy Harvey, age 38, their sons William age 1, Robert 3, and daughter Mary 10. And **Jacob Orr**, his cousin, age 25, his wife, Martha Frost age 25 and their children, Vesta and Horatio both under 5. Orr family has 782 names in the records at GHS.

**James Patterson**, age 22, and his wife Mary Whitehill, age 21. They had no children, she died in 1879 and he married 2nd, Lurie Keyser, and moved to Cabot where he died in 1893.

**Jonathan J. Peck**, age 32, his wife, Mira Tucker, and their 3 children; Eugene born in May, Abbie age 2, and Jonas age 4. She died in 1846 and he married 2nd Roxanna Lowell. There are 407 names in the Peck family records at GHS. [He is 5th cousin of my GG Grandfather-jwb]

**Asa Philbrick**, age 40-50, his wife, Phoebe Emery, age 42, and their children; Olive 3, David, Charles, George 8, Lydia 11, Liman, Timothy, and Mary 15. Philbrick family has 11 names in records at GHS.

**Thomas Scott**, age 24, his wife, Polly Wormwood, age 29, and their oldest son, William, age 1, Groton's Sleeping Sentinel of Civil War history. There are 729 names in Scott family records at GHS.

**Moses Weld**, about 29, and his brother Martin, age 23, expert axe-makers. Martin moved to ME and Martin married Imogene George in 1841. He continued to make axes in Groton until 1870 where they raised a family of 5. There are 40 names in the Weld family records at GHS.

**Ephraim Wheeler**, age 60-70, with his wife age 60-70 and two boys 10-15 and one 15-20. This may be the Ephraim Wheeler b. 1773, married Esther Converse in 1808 at Wardsboro, VT. He was in Townshend, VT in 1810, Groton in 1840 and died in Wardsboro in 1849. Names of the boys are not known. Not in GHS records.

**Peter and William Whitehill**, cousins, and their nephews, **James B. and James Milligan Whitehill** were all in the 1840 Groton census with their families, except for Milligan who was living alone until he married in 1843. There are 4812 names in the Whitehill family records at GHS.

**Hiram Wood**, age 35, his wife Hannah Gates age 37, and their children Mary 8, Eunice 5, John 4, and Hiram 2. Wood family has 14 names at GHS.

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Starting with the 1850 census all names in the family were recorded, so it is easier to connect them to the correct extended family.

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## GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Visit GHS Web page at Historical Society on <http://www.grotonvt.com/>

Why do we collect objects, record their stories, and work to preserve them for future generations? And why is it so important to inform our community, particularly our younger people, about the history of Groton?

*Objects can inspire us or trouble us deeply - but only if you know what they are, know their stories. Otherwise they're just things, and a photo of Babe Ruth is just a picture of some guy with a bat. People need to know these stories; we need to continue to tell them, repeatedly, even if we know the stories well - because there are new young people coming along all the time, and they will know the stories only if they're told them. Usually when we say that something is touching, we mean it touches us emotionally. But these histories touch us by letting us examine tangible objects. By focusing on material objects more intently, we can sometimes transcend the tangible and come to a better understanding of their meaning - something that is, ironically - intangible. (excerpt from Peter Gilbert's commentary on Public Radio, May 2014)*

With the vast majority of our nation's cultural heritage in storage, housing art and artifacts is one of the most important factors for their long-term preservation. Upgrading storage conditions certainly isn't rocket science, but it does take time and resources. Small and incremental steps, though, can make striking improvements to the way we store our collections. An hour-long webinar focused on storeroom and storage mount solutions that can be reasonably constructed by Society personnel and will introduce online resources that can help. You can access the recorded webinar at: [www.connectingtocollections.org/storagesolutions](http://www.connectingtocollections.org/storagesolutions).

Included with the webinar is a short list of suggested online resources, including the new Storage Techniques for Art, Science and History (STASH) website, [stashc.com](http://stashc.com), maintained by the Foundation of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC).

The University of Vermont has an extensive collection of primary source materials from Vermont history, including 80,000 books,

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200,000 photographs, 7,500 manuscript maps, and nearly 8,000 linear feet of Vermont manuscripts! In addition, they have a Rare Books Collection, and documents on the university itself spanning its founding in 1791 to the present. Incidentally they also have copies of the GHS Newsletter.

McLure's Alumni Band held its last concert on Memorial Weekend in Monroe, NH, playing to a large crowd of enthusiastic supporters and ending more than 80 years of musical entertainment started by C. George McLure in the 1930's with McLure's Student Band of Groton, VT. He later expanded to include School Bands in many surrounding towns. After retiring for about 10 years he organized McLure's Alumni Band in 1989 recruiting from his earlier students. After his death in 1994 the Band continued under the direction of Edith Emery, but time took its toll on the players, and the faithful few reluctantly decided to disband after their final concert.

One of Arthur Schaller's series, Billboard Buildings, will be on view in the Sullivan Museum and History Center at Norwich University from June 6 through December 19, 2014. There are 24 two-dimensional works, as well as several of his three-dimensional models and other constructs. Schaller's works strive for balance between abstract formal two-dimensional composition and speculative spatial realism

Picture the Past.—If you have pictures of Groton in the good old days, why not share them with others interested in the town? You can scan them and email them to the Newsletter editor ([jwbenzie@mchsi.com](mailto:jwbenzie@mchsi.com)) or the Website editor, ([donsmith@donsmitty.com](mailto:donsmith@donsmitty.com)) and they can be used in the newsletter and posted on the website.

Have you joined the Face Book Group "I grew up in Groton Vermont"? Terry Reilly and others started the group a few years ago and it has grown to include members from many different states and some out of the country. Local members can help those far away keep in touch with their home town.

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