
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume 21 Issue 1

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Winter 2008

EARLY SETTLERS IN GROTON



Timothy Emery grandson and namesake of an early settler.

CONTENTS

	Page
Early Settlers.....	1
Web page access	3
Aberdeen Scotland Granite Industry.....	4
GHS Update.....	14

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GROTON FAMILIES in 1800

Synopsis: *Groton pioneers and early settlers before 1800 were reported in recent newsletters. **James Abbott** and his wife, **Zelpha Smith**, came to Groton in 1782 and they were called the 'first settlers' in town by Groton historian, **Waldo Glover**. **Zelpha** died on August 31, 1784 six days after giving birth to **Sarah** the first 'recorded' birth and death in town. **James** married **Mehitable Hidden** in 1785 and the family moved to Ohio in 1807 where **James** died about 1814. **Jesse Heath***

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING SCHEDULE

(second Tuesday)

April through October
10 AM at the Peter Paul House,
1203 Scott Hwy.

(Continued from page 1)

brought his bride, *Phebe Straw*, to Groton in 1781, built his first log dwelling and their first 3 children were born here. They moved to Newbury later and then Ryegate where they were living when the 1790 census was taken, but were back in Groton for the 1800 & 1810 censuses. **Aaron Hosmer** an adventurer living in Newbury in 1760, when he married *Caroline Chamberlain*, was trapping, hunting and fishing in Groton and the surrounding area for many years but apparently only built temporary shelters until shortly before the 1790 Groton census in which he was enumerated with two of his sons. **Edmund Morse** 'settled' in Groton in 1786 with his wife, *Sarah Wesson*, and Groton historian *General Albert Harleigh Hill*, their grandson, claimed they were the first 'permanent settlers' in town. Edmund built the first sawmill in 1790 and probably built the 'first' plank house in town. Only four other plank homes were on the Grand List in 1803 owned by *James Abbott*, *Dominicus Gray*, *William Frost* and *Moses Plummer* (came to Groton in 1801 and returned to Maine in 1804); log cabins were not permanent dwellings for tax purposes. Other families in Groton

for the 1790 census were **Israel Bailey**, **John Darling** and his son **Robards**, **Jonathan James**, and **Timothy Townshend** son-in-law of John Darling. At least three other families living in town earlier either left or died before the 1790 census - **Jacob Jenness**, **Archibald McLachlin**, and **Peter Wesson**. Several other families who came after the 1790 census and left before the 1800 census, included: **Samuel Bacon**, **Samuel Fellows**, **Joshua Merrill**, **Moses Noyes** and **Benjamin Smith**.

Timothy Townshend's family was the only one of the eight families living in Groton in 1790 that was not listed in the 1800 census. In addition 30 more families, including **Jesse Heath**, were enumerated in 1800 for a total population of 248 people. There were 117 free white males and 124 free white females plus 7 "other free persons". The other free persons were all in the John Phelps family, whom Groton historian *General A. H. Hill* reported was of African descent, although his wife was listed as white. There were 9 men and 6 women 45 years of age or older; 25 men and 27 women ages 26-

45; 10 men and 15 women ages 16-26; 18 boys and 16 girls ages 10-16; and 55 boys and 60 girls under 10 years of age. The new family heads were **Abraham Alexander**, **Benjamin Bailey** fourth cousin of Israel's father, **Jeremiah Batchelder**, **Samuel Darling** son of John, **Charles Emery** and sons **John** and **Timothy**, **William Frost**, **Ephraim Gary**, **Dominicus Gray**, **Jacob Hatch**, **John Hill** son-in-law of Edmund Morse, **James Hooper**, **Nathaniel Knight**, **Silas Lund**, **Jonathan Macomber**, **Enoch Manchester**, **Truman Martin**, **Bradbury Morrison**, **Daniel Munro**, **Susannah Noyes** wife or widow of Moses, **John Phelps**, **Edward Pollard**, **John Remick**, **Kuke [Ezekiel?] Thurston**, **William Taisey** and son **Robert**, and **Edmund Welch** and his brother **Jonathan**. At least a dozen veterans of the American Revolutionary War were living in Groton in 1800 – James Abbott, Abraham Alexander, Benjamin

Bailey, Jeremiah Batchelder, Charles Emery, Dominicus Gray, Jacob Hatch, Jesse Heath, Aaron Hosmer, Jonathan Macomber, Edward Pollard, and Edmund Welch. Other veterans also came to Groton later.

A dozen families in the 1800 census of Groton were not in the 1810 census. **John Remick** died in 1805 and his widow, Dolly (Hibbard) Remick is listed as head of the family. **Bradbury Morrison** died on April 30, 1810 before the census was taken and his widow, Betsey (Emery) Morrison is listed as head of the family. Seven families moved away. **Jonathan Macomber** apparently moved to Ogdensburg, NY before 1803 where his youngest child was born; **Nathaniel Knight** moved to Ryegate in 1804; **Susannah (Lunt) Noyes**, widow of Moses, apparently moved back to NH with her young children after she sold the sawmill and lands to Silas Lund (possibly her brother)

(Continued on page 5)

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEB PAGE

Easy access from <http://www.grotonvt.com>

ABERDEEN SCOTLAND GRANITE INDUSTRY

By Lorna Simpson

Graeme Robertson, managing director of a granite memorial business in Aberdeen, Scotland that his great-grandfather established in 1876, presented a short history of the Aberdeen Granite Industry to the members of the Aberdeen and North-East Scotland Family History Society (ANESFHS). Lorna Simpson summarized his report in the August 2007 issue of the ANESFHS Journal. Lorna lives in Aberdeen where she volunteers at the ANESFHS shop regularly. When she was a graduate student at Bryn Mawr College in the 1950's she visited her relatives in Barre, VT and had an opportunity to see the Rock of Ages granite quarry and manufacturing plant. The article is printed here with the permission of the ANESFHS and Mrs. Simpson.

Aberdeen is known as the Granite City. The hard rock, formed millions of years ago, lies deep beneath our feet, and in parts of town we can still walk on the "causeys", the paving sets, which the masons of old shaped by hand. And, if we look

around, granite is everywhere: in handsome public buildings, in elegant mansions, in streets of tenement flats and in sculptures. Some may be 200 years old – yet, so hard is the granite, they look as though they had been constructed yesterday, especially when the mica glints in the sun, and grey stone is turned to silver.

In the countryside, from earliest days, granite boulders were gathered from the fields and hillsides for buildings, held together with mortar. St. Machar's Cathedral is one of Aberdeen city's oldest granite buildings. Although there is some freestone in it, Graeme assured us that it can be described as the oldest granite cathedral in the world, and is quite obviously erected of surface not quarried, stone. The first positive record of quarrying is in 1603, when a certain John Mason, "John the Mason", obtained permission from the Town Council to open a quarry on the Freedom Lands of Aberdeen to supply window sills and lintels and other large stones for the builders. But for years to

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 3)

in 1804 at Noyes' Pond which then became known as Lund's Pond and is now called Rickers.

James Abbott moved to Ohio in 1807; **Edward Pollard** probably moved to Newbury where his grandchildren later lived; and **Kuke Thurston**, believed to be Ezekiel, probably moved to Orange, VT before 1808 when his children were born there. Whatever happened to **Abraham Alexander** is unknown, but his daughter Lydia married James Taylor of Ryegate in 1804 and perhaps he went to live with them. Three families are not listed in the Groton Historical Society family records: **Truman Martin**, **Daniel Munro**, and **John Phelps**.

The settlers who stayed were soon joined by others and Groton became a thriving town early in the nineteenth century. Many people in the area today can trace their ancestors to one or more of these early Groton families.

Jeremiah Batchelder was born in 1772 at Kensington, Rockingham Co., NH and died May 21, 1850. He settled in Groton before 1797 and was elected at the first Town Meeting to serve with Samuel Darling as hog reifs. His wife's name was

Sally and the family was listed in the 1800 census with 2 girls less than 10 years of age. In the 1810 census the family had 2 boys and 3 girls less than 10 and 2 girls 10-16 years of age. Jeremiah's father, Jeremiah was a Revolutionary War soldier; he died February 1, 1818 and is buried in the Batchelder family burial grounds in Groton on Lot 178, Second Division about a half-mile south of Ricker Mills.

Charles Emery and his two sons **John** and **Timothy** brought their families to Groton in 1795. Charles three oldest daughters also came with their husbands and his youngest daughter married a few years after arriving. Charles was born August 16, 1745 in Kittery, ME and died May 14, 1845 in Groton. He married first Ann Hodgdon born in 1745 and died July 14, 1803 in Groton. Their daughter Martha "Patty" married **Jonathan Welch** August 3, 1786; Betsey "Sarah" married **Bradbury Morrison** January 25, 1789 in Shapleigh, ME; Mary "Polly" married **James Hooper** in 1792; and Meribah married Noah Morrison (a cousin of Bradbury) in 1798 and they both died in 1801

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 4)

come, quarrying remained spasmodic. Then, in 1741, a disastrous fire destroyed the wooden buildings over a large part of the town, and the magistrates enacted that in future all buildings would have walls of stone and roofs of slate or tile. And so the Granite City was born! By the mid-18th century, granite was in general use, and quarries opened up all over the area.

Rubislaw Quarry, the North-East's most successful and best-known quarry, opened about 1741 and was worked continuously for 230 years, hundreds of thousands of tons of grey granite being blasted and cut from the ground in that time. When it closed in 1971, it was 450 feet deep, quite breathtaking to look into; and the quarry workers used to say, with every justification, that "half of Aberdeen had come oot o' that hole". And now, Graeme commented wryly, such is fate that the problem seems to be what to do with the hole that used to be Rubislaw Quarry.

The figures for quarrying were impressive. From 1897 – 1904, for example, the output from all the quarries in Aberdeenshire averaged over 300,000 tons per annum and employed approximately 2,000 men over 50 – 60 different quarries: famous names, and familiar if you have granite-working an-

cestors, such as Rubislaw, Kemnay, Persley, Dancing Cairns, Tom's Forest, Hill of Fare, Corrennie and Tilliefourie, all producing shades of grey or pink granite. It was very big business! But that was 100 years ago. Today, sadly, all local quarries have gradually ceased production except for crushed granite for road-building. At the end of the Second World War, only Rubislaw and Kemnay still functioned to any real extent as producers of block stone. And now virtually all granite used locally comes from abroad, notably from India and China.

The history of quarrying, cutting and shaping granite is only part of the story. The development of granite-polishing is also very fascinating. In 1820, Alexander MacDonald, a young Perthshire freestone mason, set up business in Aberdeen. One day, he read in the paper that the British Museum had been presented with a few pieces of polished granite from Egypt, some 4,000 years old. He traveled to London to see the pieces and returned fired with the ambition to discover the art of polishing, not by hand, but by mechanical

means. The commercial potential was enormous. With great ingenuity he succeeded, thereby laying the foundations for the granite industry in Aberdeen. The era of machinery had begun. Many, of course, followed his lead, and by the end of the century there were as many as 83 firms, their yards dotted all over the town, and a considerable export business had built up worldwide. Aberdeen granite was everywhere.

At the same time, Aberdeen was exporting men. Skilled craftsmen moved abroad and helped to establish granite industries wherever the stone was to be found. From our own family histories, many of us know of the annual emigration of granite workers to North America, many to “Rock of Ages” in Barre, Vermont. Some settled, becoming the American branches of our families. Others, having built up a sizeable sum of money, returned home, to re-emigrate the next spring.

By the end of the 19th century, Aberdeen led the granite industry of the world – but it was all to change. The loss of the American market after the 1929 slump (economic depression); increasing foreign competition; the development of new road-

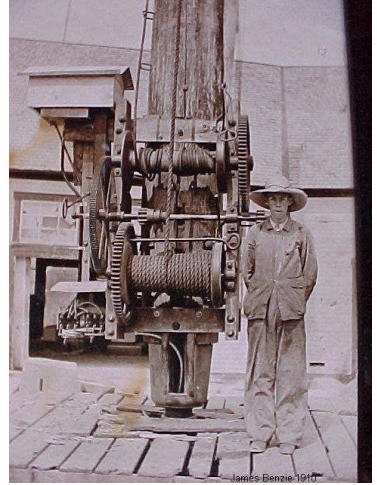
making and building materials; the growing popularity of cremation – all these had a negative impact. Despite firms introducing new machinery and amalgamating, it was not enough, and by the 1970’s most of the yards had closed. The effect of cremation on the granite-memorial business had been forecast many years earlier and undoubtedly, it has had an effect. But most people who choose burial do so deliberately because they wish to erect a memorial – and demand remains high. The desire to commemorate would seem to be a very strong human emotion.

Graeme’s firm, Robertson’s Memorials, is the only surviving family business in the Aberdeen granite industry – a justifiably proud claim, but also sad when one thinks back to when Aberdeen led the world. The main business continues to lie in providing granite memorials, manufacturing still but also importing from India, to meet changing public demands. Adaptation, diversification to specialize in granite worktops and other stone products for domestic use, and the application of the newest technologies to old craft skills have proved to be the key to survival and success.

Groton Granite



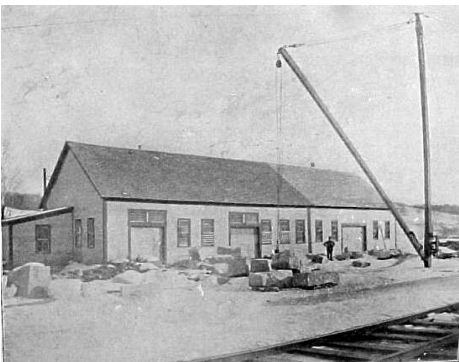
Groton granite from the abandoned cemetery vault



James Benzie working at his fathers stoneshed in 1910



Groton quarry workers in 1910



Stoneshed leased by the M. T. Benzie Co.



John Benzie with I. M. Ricker monument



Five granite firms in Groton employed more than 100 men in 1900.



John Benzie, owner, and his crew of workers at the M. T. Benzie Co. in 1910

(Continued from page 5)

without issue and are buried in the Darling Cemetery in Groton. Charles married second Jane "Jean", widow of John Vance, on October 11, 1803 and she died in Groton on December 5, 1832 and is buried in the Darling Cemetery.

John Emery was born April 12, 1763 in Kittery, ME and married Sarah "Sally" Parker in Shapleigh, ME on February 4, 1788. They came to Groton with his parents and raised a family of 8 boys and 3 girls. Sally died in Groton on December 13, 1854 and he died on December 13, 1857. They were both buried in the Darling Cemetery.

Timothy Emery was born in 1768 in Kittery, ME and married Mary Wilson December 6, 1792 in Shapleigh, ME. They came to Groton soon after his parents and siblings and raised a family of 3 boys and 5 girls. Another boy died at the age of five. Timothy died in Groton on October 15, 1844.

William Frost was born in 1762 in Berwick, York, ME and married first Lydia Hill on April 3, 1792. The family had 4 girls and one boy less than 10 years of age in the 1800 Groton

census. They are listed in the 1810 and 1820 censuses with 10 and 7 members respectively, but the mother is missing in the 1810 census. William married second Sarah "Sally" Lovering on April 17, 1811 in Corinth, VT. William was elected to be the constable and collector and the sealer of weights and measures at the first town meeting in 1797. He also served the town as captain of the militia. William, his two wives, some of his children and at least one grandchild are buried in the Frost family burial grounds in Groton.

Ephraim Gary was born August 6, 1770 in Sanford, York Co., ME and he married Sarah Hill at Berwick, ME on Feb. 17, 1798 and they had one boy less than 10 years old in the 1800 census. The family had 7 people in the 1810 census and 5 in the next two censuses. The family is not in the 1840 census of Groton; apparently they went back to Berwick, ME where he died Oct. 12, 1849.

Dominicus Gray was born April 26, 1761 and died in Groton on October 21, 1832. He married Sarah Plummer in Sanford, ME Nov. 27, 1785 and they came to Groton before 1797. They raised a family of 5

children: Patience who married Reuben Whitcher; Mary "Polly" who married Hosea Welch; Andrew whose widow married Ira Lowe; Sarah who married Timothy Carter; and Ruth who married William Nelson. Dominicus was elected grand juror at the first town meeting. Dominicus, his wife and some of his children were buried in the Gray family burial grounds.

Jacob Hatch was born in Wells, ME on August 11, 1765 and died in Groton on July 16, 1827. He married Martha Maxwell in Wells on May 15, 1788 and the family came to Groton in 1795. They settled on the western half of lot number 18 in the first division and later bought the western half of lot 17. They raised a family of 9 children: Moses who married Jean Gates first and Jane Carius second; Jacob who married Sally Morrison; John who married Mary Clark first and Sabra Welch second; Lucretia who married James Dustin; Maxwell; Sally; Martha; Phoebe who married Hiram Meader; and Mehitable who married James Whitehill.

James Hooper was born March 1770 in ME and died in Groton September 16, 1848. He married Mary "Polly" Emery in

1792 and they came to Groton in 1796 where they raised 11 children: Anna who married Moses Frost; Polly never married; Margaret "Peggy" who married Daniel Coffrin first and Samuel Hooper second; Susannah who married Jonathan Lund; Meribah who married Enoch Manchester Jr.; Betsey who married Samuel Emery; James who died age 5; John who married Betsey Welch first and Harriet McConnell second; Asenath who married Ebenezer Paul; Lois who married Isaac Morse; and Elijah who married Marcia Darling.

Silas Lund was born September 12, 1762 in Dunstable NH. He married first Comfort Batchelder in Warren, NH on October 23, 1788 and they came to Groton in 1791 where they raised four children: Jeremiah who was married and had 7 children in the 1830 census; Moses who married Betsy Page; Elizabeth who married Joel Welch; and Jonathan who married Susannah Hooper first and Lois Hart second. Silas acquired the sawmill and lands from Susannah (Lunt) Noyes, widow of Moses Noyes (and possibly his sister) located at Noyes Pond

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

which then became Lund Pond and is now Rickers. Silas married second Charity Darling.

Enoch Manchester was born about 1767 in Ryegate, married Lucy Wilmot about 1795 and settled in Groton where they raised a family of 7 children: Nathan, Enoch Jr. who married Maribah Hooper, Joel, Osee, Isaac, Hannah, and Lucy. In their later years, about 1838, they moved to St. Lawrence Co., NY where they both died. Enoch died December 10, 1851.

Bradbury Morrison was born in 1766 at Wells, ME and died April 30, 1810 in Groton. He married Betsey "Sarah" Emery at Shapleigh, ME on January 25, 1789 and they came to Groton in 1796 and settled on lot number 12, first division. They raised 10 children: Charles who married three times – Sally Rhodes, Elizabeth Crown and Sally Baldwin; Betsey who married Isaiah Frost; Abraham who married Martha Townshend; Sally who married Jacob Hatch Jr.; Nancy who married Samuel Plummer; Joseph who married Sally Darling; Bradley who married Avis Jones; Timothy who married Olive Paul first and then

Sarah Rhodes; Meribah who married Joseph Ricker; and Martha who married Jonathan Welch Jr.

William Taisey and his son, **Robert** brought their families from Scotland to Groton in 1797. Originally part of the 'Scotch Company of Farmers' that settled Ryegate they arrived in Boston just before the battle of Bunker Hill and were given the choice of joining the British Army, going to Nova Scotia, or returning to Scotland which they did and then returned in 1795. Not finding suitable land left in Ryegate they settled in Groton – William purchased lot number 40 on October 10, 1797 located on the river, which was later part of the Orson Ricker and I. N. Hall farms; and Robert purchased lot number 39, which he later sold to his brother William Jr. and purchased lot number 25 on July 10, 1801, where he spent the rest of his life. About 1810 he built the stone house patterned after the peasant houses in Scotland. William Jr. married Judith Darling on August 2, 1808 in Groton and they raised two children; Elizabeth who married Isaac N. Hall; and Lydia who married Orson Ricker.

Robert Taisey and his

wife Agnes Gault raised a family of 8 children: William who married Mary Rhodes; John who married Phebe Heath; Agnes who married James Heath; James who married Ruth Darling; Elizabeth; Mary "Lizzie" who married Daniel Darling; Robert Jr. who married Rhoda Darling; and Thomas who was married and had two children.

Edmund Welch and his brother **Jonathan** came to Groton from Wells, ME and settled on lot number 13 which they purchased from Aaron Hosmer Jr. on April 3, 1792.

Edmund Welch was born in 1753 and married Hannah Annis on February 6, 1777 at Wells, ME. They raised a family of 10 children: Catherine who married **Samuel Darling**; Steven who married Sarah Young; James; Forrest who married Hulda Paul; Iza who married Nathaniel Cunningham; Levi who married Nancy Cunningham; Edmund "Neddy" who married Belinda Heath; Rebe who married Lydia Parker; Sabra who married John Hatch; and Nehemiah who married Dorothy "Dolly" Page.

Jonathan Welch was born in 1761 and married Martha "Patty" Emery on August 3, 1786.

They raised a family of 10 children: Hosea who married first Mary "Polly" Gray and second Ms. Graham; Betsey who married Enoch Page Jr.; Anna who married John Whitehill; Medad who married Abigail "Nabby" Hosmer; Patty who died age four; Joel who died age three; Ruth who married William Vance; Joel who married Elizabeth Lund; Jonathan Jr. who married Martha Morrison; and David who married Dolly Titus.

Benjamin Bailey, Samuel Darling and John Hill were included with the Bailey, Darling and Morse families in earlier issues of the newsletter. Benjamin is a 4th cousin of Israel Bailey's father, Samuel is the son of John Darling and John Hill is a son-in-law of Edmund Morse.

The Groton Historical Society welcomes any corrections and additions to these brief sketches of the Groton families in 1800. Please send information to the society at P. O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046-0089, or e-mail to jwbenzie@uslink.net

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY UPDATE

Membership for 2008 is \$10 for individuals and \$15 for families. Delinquent members are dropped from the mailing list if dues are not paid before their grace period expires. Mailing labels show the last year of dues paid and the year is highlighted in yellow during the grace period and in red for the last mailing. Present membership includes 17 individuals and 6 families paid for 2008; 29 individuals and 4 families for 2007; and 4 individuals and 4 families are in their grace period.

The University of Vermont Bailey/Howe Library has requested back issues of the newsletter for their Wilbur Collection of local Vermont historical societies. Issues number 1 & 2 in 1988 and issue number 11 in the Spring of 1991 could not be located. If anyone has a copy of these missing issues please make a copy and send them to the GHS at P. O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046. After issue number 14 in the Spring of 1992 the newsletters were not numbered until the Fall of 1999 when a new numbering system was initiated starting with Volume 12, issue 1. Six un-numbered issues were found between issues

number 14 and volume 12 issue

1. They are:

1992 Fall

1993 Spring & Fall

1994 Summer

1995 February

1997 June

No issues were found for 1996 or 1998. If anyone has other issues between the Spring of 1992 and Fall of 1999 please make copies for the GHS records and copies will be forwarded to the University of Vermont.

The Vermont Historical Society is also requesting back issues of all the local historical society newsletters for their library at the Vermont History Center in Barre.

The Groton Historical Society meets at 10 A.M. in the Peter Paul House at 1203 Scott Highway in Groton on the second Tuesday of April through October. Meetings are open to the public and the house is open for tours on Fall Foliage Day, the first Saturday in October, and by appointment the rest of the year.

On Fall Foliage Day 2007 well over one hundred visitors toured the building and reminisced about Groton's history and the people who made it.

A lot of family history information was provided by the visitors and now the family history records have more than 40,000 names. Special thanks to all those who supplied family information for the GHS records.

The Bethel Historical Society is collecting information about George H. Guernsey, a 19th century architect and builder, who made plans for the 1888 alteration of the Methodist Church in Groton through the efforts of Judge Isaac N. Hall a member of the original 1836 building committee. The Bethel Historical Society is especially interested in finding other buildings designed or built by George Guernsey. Other Groton buildings that had characteristics similar to those designed by Guernsey were the Benjamin F. Clark and the Isaac M. Ricker homes which have both been destroyed by fire. The John R. Darling home was built about the same time and may have been designed, or influenced, by Guernsey, but the society is not aware of any records to document these guesses.

Archival, or document, collections can be found in every historical society, but many of them do not have an archivist and are not aware of the special needs

of an archival collection. The initial processing of an archival collection, as well as how to store, handle, and care for the materials in these collections – including paper, photographs, and multimedia is very important for preserving history.

At the October meeting the society voted to investigate the system being used by the Charlotte Historical Society to make a new and complete inventory of their collections. With the aid of a lap top computer and Chenhall's *Nomenclature for Museum Cataloguing* each piece of the collection will be located, described, and photographed. When completed, the museum will have a totally new exhibit, organized to improve the use of the available space, and show their unique local collections.

The article on page 4 about Aberdeen Scotland's granite industry brings to mind Groton's short-lived granite business late in the 19th century and early 20th century. Many of our granite workers then had to travel to Barre, South Ryegate or other granite centers for employment. Some pictures of Groton's granite quarry and stonesheds are on pages 8 & 9.

Groton Historical Society Newsletter

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