
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter

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Spring 2017

MAPLE SUGARING TIME



Crown's sugarhouse 1957

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This is the time of year, with freezing nights and warm days, that sap is moving up from the roots of trees to nourish the buds and start them growing to produce new shoots and leaves for the coming summer. The leaves in turn produce more nourishment over the summer for growing shoots and roots. The roots store more nourishment for the next winter and spring.

The sugar maple trees are named for the high sugar content of their sap, and it also has that distinct maple flavor, when boiled down to syrup, that tastes so good on pancakes, French toast, oatmeal, and almost anything that needs sweetening. In fact pure maple syrup is so sweet you will probably want to eat some plain doughnuts or sour pickles to help mitigate the sweetness.

On April Fools Day this year the Groton Historical Society

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hosted a sugaring-off party at the Peter Paul House with sugar-on-snow, doughnuts, and pickles.

The Peter Paul House was once again filled with the old time aroma of doughnuts frying in lard and maple syrup boiling to the soft candy stage for sugar-on-snow. Around 50 people braved the spring snow storm to enjoy Linda Nunn's doughnuts and homemade sour pickles and Janet Page's sugar-on-snow crullers. Deane Page boiled the syrup and served maple sugar on freshly fallen snow to the eagerly waiting crowd.

Although the snow storm kept some folks away, the house was lively with children and adults who wanted a taste of the past and a chance to learn how to make doughnuts. Linda was using a recipe handed down from Gary Crane's mother, Joyce, and Janet was using Bing Page's special recipe for crullers made with less sugar to compliment the sweet maple sugar on snow. Brent Smith had installed new electrical outlets at the Peter Paul House to handle the electric fry pan and deep fat fryer. Some folks who missed the event asked if we would do it again next year. This is a distinct possibility. Deborah Jurist, President.



GHOST HELPS SOLVE OWN MURDER

On a January afternoon in 1897, a neighborhood boy in Greenbrier County, West Virginia, made a startling discovery: the dead body of Elva Zona Heaster. Elva's husband, Erasmus (Edward) Shue, had sent the boy to see if she needed him to pick up anything from the market before he came home from work. Shue was working on location as a blacksmith at the time, and had only been married to Heaster for three months

After coming across Heaster's lifeless body, the panicked boy ran to tell his mother what he had found; his mother promptly alerted the local doctor (Dr. Knapp). By the time Dr. Knapp arrived to examine the body, Shue had already returned home and had washed and prepared it for burial, dressing her in a high-necked dress while placing a veil over her head

As Dr. Knapp began examining the body, his attempts to inspect the head and neck area were hindered by Shue; he was cradling her head while crying, and responded violently any time the doctor came near. After examining the rest of her body and finding nothing substantial, Dr. Knapp determined that the cause of death was "everlasting faint," which he later changed to "complications from pregnancy," (Dr. Knapp had been treating Heaster for a few weeks prior for what he described as "female trouble," so he assumed the death was related).

Soon thereafter, Heaster's body was taken to her childhood home of Little Sewell Mountain for her funeral. During the ceremony, people began to notice that Shue was acting rather strange. He was obsessing with Heaster's head and neck, wrapping her in a scarf that didn't match her dress (he insisted it was her favorite scarf) and placing excess pillows around her head (claiming he wanted her to rest comfortably). Most of the guests chalked it up to grief, except one: Elva's mother, Mary Jane Heaster.

Heaster had never liked Shue, and was convinced that he had something to do with her daughter's passing (despite a lack of evidence proving so).

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She prayed every evening for several weeks, hoping to find some sort of answer. Finally, a month after her daughter's funeral, Heaster's prayers were answered. She claimed that Elva's ghost had appeared in her dreams four nights in a row, telling her that Shue had murdered her by choking her and breaking her neck. According to the ghost, Shue was upset when he returned home from work and thought that Elva hadn't cooked any meat for dinner.

After the fourth dream, Heaster went to speak with the local prosecutor, John Alfred Preston. She told Preston about her dreams and what the ghost had said, and while Preston was skeptical, he decided to follow up with Dr. Knapp. After learning from the doctor that Shue had become violent and refused to let him examine Elva's head and neck, Preston decided to re-open the case. An autopsy showed that the first and second vertebrae in Heaster's neck were broken, and that her windpipe was crushed. There were also finger marks on her neck, indicating that she had been strangled.

Eventually, the case went to trial, with Mary Jane Heaster serving as the prosecution's star witness. Preston was careful to avoid bringing up the ghost story since it might be considered hearsay by the defense. Shue's lawyer on the other hand decided to question Heaster about her dreams during cross-examination, hoping to prove that she was an unreliable witness. The plan backfired, however, as the jury seemed to believe Heaster's story. It didn't help that Shue took the stand in his own defense, and did quite a poor job. According to a report from the Greenbrier Independent, Shue's testimony "made an unfavorable impression on the spectators."

The jury deliberated for just over an hour before returning a guilty verdict. Shue was sentenced to life in prison, and eventually died in 1900 due to complications from measles and pneumonia. Though Heaster's "ghost testimony," wasn't the sole evidence used in the case against Shue — he had a history of domestic violence including the mysterious death of a previous wife — it did mark the first and only time the testimony of a ghost was used in a court case.

How kitchens changed

Kitchens have changed dramatically since the first settlers came to Groton in the 1780's. Even during most of the 1800s, there simply weren't kitchens in the home, but rather the fireplace hearth was the center of all cooking. A good example of this is in the basement of the Peter Paul House. However, when cast iron stoves became available in the 1850's, the notion of a separated 'living room' developed and the stove became the cooking spot.

The idea of a 'kitchen' came from a book by Catherine Beecher and her sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe. In 1869 the two sisters published a revised version of *The American Woman's Home*. Among its many ideas was an initial layout for a kitchen as well as a set of sketches for how various goods and ingredients could be stored in an efficient manner. Catharine Beecher's design for kitchen efficiency started with ergonomics to make storage and retrieval easier. This was a revolutionary concept at the time, but didn't take hold for many years later.

The Stove as the Center of Everything

The cast iron stove (and cast iron kettles, pans, etc.) became the center of what would eventually become known as the kitchen. The sitting area was separated and some primitive storage of ingredients and kitchen tools began to have their own space. Around the late 1890's the stove was set against a wall with the pipe going up along it. At this point, the stove morphed from a dual cooking/heating source to something reserved for cooking.

The Kitchen Becomes a 'Thing'

As more homes had access to running water and electricity, people began spending more time in the kitchen. Because of this, people needed places for the growing bounty of utensils, ingredients, and other kitchen wares. Around 1900 the lady of the house was enjoying her new stove. And cabinets were built to keep the kitchen stuff organized, while still

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giving a surface to mix, cut, and prepare the food. The early cabinets soon became larger with more space for actually spending time in the kitchen. Some kitchens were even large enough for a rocking chair. And so the 'kitchen' started becoming its own room and new houses all had one built.

The Hoosier Cabinet

In 1899, the Hoosier Cabinet Company sprung up with the amazing idea of putting EVERYTHING needed to cook in to one standalone cabinet that could be set next to a stove and the sink. An early ad for the Hoosier Cabinet advertises how the cabinet saves miles of steps that were formerly between the barn, pantry, shed, and well. It was a powerful idea that got ahead of the cultural shift that moved cooking from a job to something that could be a pleasure. Though there are few remaining cabinets from those early days of the Hoosier Cabinet Company, a later model is displayed in the Peter Paul House. The Hoosier evolved quickly over the coming years and so did the ads. The cabinets even began coming with pre-installed containers and recipes in the doors!

Moving Toward Integrated Efficiency

Before the Hoosiers reached mass adoption, various companies came together to promote an idea of an integrated, efficient kitchen. The 1906 edition of Craftsman Magazine showed a model kitchen, where a large sink and preparation area is set up with some basic storage above it. During this time, the sink was typically a large porcelain monster that had replaced the black cast iron one. This is why we have the phrase "Everything but the Kitchen Sink!" because it was such a heavy monstrosity. Another image from Craftsman Magazine showed the cooking area with pot and pan storage. This gives you a sense of why the Hoosier cabinet caught on so well - it was a total bear to have all those pots and pans hanging from ceilings and shelves! About this time there started to be a 'flow' to kitchen design. They were only missing one thing, though: Cabinets!

Cabinets

From 1900-1920, many families were choosing to stay in smaller homes, and this meant that things like the Hoosier (And

Cabinets!) became more important, because they simply didn't have space for all of those wall hangings. As families grew, their need for various types and quantity of dishes grew, so the cabinets became even more necessary. A modern kitchen looked like the entire room now had a nice flow to it, but each of the areas (sink, stove, cabinets, etc.) were all still standalone. At this time the kitchen was becoming a room that may be seen by guests and family members alike. The cabinets became display cases just as much as storage! Another interesting shift that was happening around the time is that cooking was starting to become a family affair.

Moving from Standalone to "Built In" Cabinets

As the kitchen became more important, home builders began considering how they could make many of these standalone items included in the home itself. The shelving, cabinetry, and lighting for a kitchen started becoming part of the space vs. an element inside it. This ultimately saved space and made the kitchen more flexible, which meant that the concept of a 'kitchen table' was now possible! A 1920's kitchen included a built-in cabinetry, a smaller sink, and a stove that was now only a turn away. And floors were being covered with linoleum!

The Kitchen Comes to Life

Everyone had a kitchen by The 1920s and 1930s and most households started eating many meals at a small kitchen table (vs. a larger dining room). The kitchen started to be much more part of the home instead of something closer to a workshop. There's now a radiator to make the preparation more comfortable, the kitchen table has its own prime spot, but no longer is out of place, and there are lovely curtains that add to the softness of the room. The flooring starts to become more fun, the cabinets have some color, and there are plants in the windows. This is also the first time we begin to see colorful pots, pans, and storage bins.

Getting Efficient During the War

As more and more homes moved to gas in the late 1930s, stoves became smaller and more efficient. They would eventually become built-in to the kitchens like the cabinets, sinks, and spot

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SUGARING-OFF-PARTY APRIL FIRST 2017



SUGAR-ON-SNOW



DOUGHNUTS FRYING



SO SWEET



SOUR PICKLES MAY BE NEEDED



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for the refrigerator would be. A new gas stove in 1940, which revolutionized efficiency in the kitchen as it freed up tons of space for other things and also cut down on mess, which allowed people to shrink the size of those formerly massive sinks. The need for efficiency housing during war-time created super-simple kitchens. The stove is now a built-in element as is the dishwasher. The War Efforts took many women out of the home for the first time as they assumed every job imaginable to fill in for soldiers. This sparked a huge boom of skills among women and they sought to apply much of the efficiency they saw at their jobs back in their homes. This created more and more functionality in the kitchens and enabled multiple people to work at once. At the same time, kitchens became where most families would eat.

The 1950s: Bring on the Color!

The Baby Boom brought on a whole new world of families and prosperity. As the culture evolved to more rock n roll and expression, so to did kitchens become more 'fun'. Modern magazines began to promote more colorfully-trimmed kitchens after the war. Many homes even featured built-in hutches that resembled the local diner. What an era! A liberal use of yellow would become a staple of many kitchens through the 1960s.

The 60s and 70s: Designer Kitchens

The unique architecture of the 1960's influenced kitchens in two ways: 1) the higher-end, designer ones began to look more space-age where one could barely tell that it was a kitchen at all and 2) Home builders looking to appeal to the middle class began developing smaller, less white-washed kitchens that felt more 'homey'. The early 1960s kitchen had a more modern, streamlined look where everything is built in. You'd barely even notice the stove if walking by! This design would eventually become a mainstay in homes across America as the kitchen became smaller and felt more like a comfortable 'command center' than its own room. This worked incredibly well with the ranch houses of the day that had more open layouts. Moving in to the 1970's, what used to be known as the 'kitchen' really ceased to be so as the family's dining table typically moved to be the centerpiece of the room.

Whitehill Stone House and Library

Earlene (Legare) Wetherbee

I grew up in the country with not many people around. Nearest neighbor was ½ mile away. Town, schools and churches were two miles from us and we usually walked to school. Can you imagine children doing that today?

Anyway we always looked forward to the annual Whitehill Reunion picnic in August every year. Relatives would come from all over New England. All kinds of food were brought in to share. Picnic tables were set up outside. If it rained we ate in the carriage house. Now we use a huge tent.

Our favorite place as kids was the Underground RR for slaves. It is up in the chamber behind a closet door under a trap door with enough room for 5 or 6 people. Another place is under the dirt floor in the borning room downstairs. Lot of folks never knew it was there so I always show it to newcomers.

Reunions are held seven miles from us at the Stone House built by my 6th and 7th generation Grandfathers and their families. James, Abraham and a sister Elizabeth came from Inchinnan, Scotland in 1798. They built log homes first then the stone houses on 500 acres of land they had bought from John Witherspoon, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

James was founder of Ryegate Presbyterian Church and a weaver. Weaving looms are still in the chamber. Abraham came from Scotland with many religious books and started the first library in Ryegate. We still have many books there.

The very first reunion was in 1928 with over 500 people. Everyone was invited, relatives, neighbors, friends, etc. I have a

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very large photo with over 500. One newspaper said 580! My parents were there.

On that day a large Carin (mound of stones) was built with everyone adding a stone to it as a Memorial to a home that burned. My husband, Bernie, keeps it and the stone house in good shape being we live only a few miles from it. He does lots of repairs on the house.

An ell made out of wood had been added in 1838 for the growing family . A lot of the original stone house is still there, including a large fireplace with oven, plank floors and plaster wall.

I had not been to the reunions for many years moving around as I did being a military wife. Started going again in 1975 when we moved back to Vermont. It wasn't long before I was voted to be Treasurer and Secretary on the board. Taxes are very high so we have rented the ell for several years to help pay them. Bernie and I redid the apartment five years ago.

At our 85th reunion, a few years back, 115 people attended. We had a big chicken BBQ, Pulled pork, baked potatoes, and corn-on-cob done by Bernie, his son Cary, and son-in-law Bobby. I, my sister and trustees did all the salads and desserts.

The home is also on the Vermont Historic list and a beautiful marker was put up in 2007. We usually have entertainment at the reunions. My granddaughter does Highland Dancing and plays violin. We have had bagpipers, authors on Underground RR, Bayley-Hazen Road, Civil War books, and Civil War Reenactments.

Five years ago we met my 5th cousins from Pt. Clyde, ME and have become very good friends. They try to come every year to the reunion and we go to visit them.

WORLD WAR I—Landings of Gallipoli Campaign

On April 25, 1915, troops from across the British Empire as well as France went ashore on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey, beginning the land offensive of the Gallipoli Campaign (also called the Dardanelles Campaign), which would end in high casualties and evacuation for them eight months later.

With trench warfare causing stagnation in the fight on the Western Front, the British and French decided to launch an attack against the Ottoman Empire, one of the Central Powers. The plan was to use naval power to break through the Dardanelles, a straight connecting the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, and then capture the Turkish capital of Constantinople (Istanbul). The naval attack began in February and March, but hidden mines made the British and French ships withdraw in failure.

After a month's delay due to supply problems, the land offensive began on April 25, with 78,000 British and French troops landing at Cape Helles (at the tip of the peninsula) and what would become known as Anzac Cove (further north and named for the Australian and New Zealand troops that landed there). Some landings were met with fierce resistance and high casualties, while others were accomplished without much opposition.

But once the troops came ashore, little progress was made, and attempts to push forward were halted by the Turks and their German allies, leaving the Anglo-French forces trapped not far from their landing beaches. Despite renewed offensives (most notably at Suvla Bay in August) and reinforcements over the coming months, both sides settled into a high-casualty stalemate from within a system of trenches, where sickness and disease were rampant. Finally, in October, the commanding officer, British general Ian Hamilton, was replaced, and the new general, Charles Monro, decided to evacuate by sea despite estimates that an evacuation would result in extremely high casualties.

Amazingly, however, the British and French were able to

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evacuate some one hundred thousand men secretly and with very limited casualties, making the evacuation arguably the most successful part of the whole campaign. They evacuated Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay in December 1915, and Cape Helles in January 1916. By the time they left, the Allied Powers had sustained some 200,000 casualties (killed, injured, or sick) and the Turks had suffered at least 87,000 deaths, with many more than that in other casualties.

Even though Gallipoli is considered a disaster, it arguably helped win World War II later. How??? The United States Marine Corps made a special study of the campaign after WW I was over – in its quest for relevance. From that study, the U.S. Marine Corps, with the U.S. Navy, cobbled together the amphibious doctrine that was successfully used in both the European/African and Pacific theaters during WWII and after, and still today. They noted the mistakes made and devised means to avoid them in the future. It still is a disaster if you lost family or friends at Gallipoli, but this dismal failure helped save lives later.

Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty, the cabinet officer in charge of the Royal Navy. First Sea Lord was the title of the senior naval officer in the Royal Navy. Mustafa Kamal was a young officer in Istanbul at the time, perhaps a captain, who led the Turkish troops from Istanbul to the invasion site where the invaders were awaiting orders to move off the beach. He later became dictator replacing the sultan, with army and people support. Churchill was largely responsible for the decision to invade Italy in WWII, which has a lot of parallels to the Gallipoli campaign.

This battle had a wider historic influence for all the nations involved. Not only the impact on the “western” allies but it also launched Mustafa Kamal into history and the modern Turkish state which was the end of the Ottoman Empire. The end of the Ottomans then left us with what is now the Middle East problem.

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Visit GHS on the internet

Email: grotonvthistory@gmail.com

Web page: grotonvthistory.org

Facebook@[grotonvthistory](https://www.facebook.com/grotonvthistory)

First meeting of 2017 is scheduled for Tuesday May 2 at the Peter Paul House, 1203 Scott Highway, Groton, VT at 6 pm.

Volunteers have been preparing Dr. Seth Eastman's book about his experiences in the Civil War for reprinting..

Volunteers are needed to repair the sign at the Peter Paul House.

Don't forget to check the GHS web page for the latest news about the activities of the society. Another good place to find news about Groton is the GHS Facebook page and the group on Facebook "I grew up in Groton" created by Terry Rielly. You can also email the society at grotonvthistory@gmail.com with any news or to inquire about any activities.

The history of Groton, *Mr. Glover's Groton*, by Waldo F. Glover has been updated and is now available for purchase. To order contact the Groton Historical Society on line (see above addresses) or by mail at Groton Historical Society, P. O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046.

Records of Groton families continues to grow with new information from members and relatives being added regularly. If you have new additions to your family be sure and submit it to GHS so the records will be as up-to-date as possible. Efforts are still underway to publish family records on the GHS web page.

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