
GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Volume 30 Issue 3

Groton, Vermont 05046

Summer 2017

GROTON STATE FOREST



Cabin at Ricker Pond

2017 OFFICERS

President	Deborah Jurist
Vice President	Brent Smith
Secretary	Philip Coutu
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Web Site Editor	Erik Volk
Newsletter Editor	J. Willard Benzie

The state of Vermont purchased the first tract of land for Groton State Forest 98 years ago, in 1919, buying timberlands that had been harvested by lumbering companies in the 1800's. Additions continued when Rob Miller closed his sawmill at the foot of Groton Pond in 1924 (See story in Spring 2004 newsletter 17-2) and in 1963 when Ricker's mill closed and in 1967 when the Seyon Trout Ranch was sold to the state. (See story in fall 2003 newsletter 16-3) The forest today is 26,164 acres in three counties, Caledonia, Orange & Washington, and six towns, Groton, Peacham, Marshfield, Plainfield, Orange and Topsham. It is managed for timber products, wildlife habitat, and recreational activities by Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Many rare, threatened, and endangered plants and animals live in the Forest. The most sensitive species are associated with the cliffs, bogs and swamps, lakes, and forests around lakes. Groton State Forest also has

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several state-designated natural areas, including Peacham Bog (748 acres), Table Top Mountain (129 acres) and Lords Hill (25 acres).

Groton State Forest contains seven state parks; Ricker Pond, Stillwater, New Discovery, Kettle Pond, Big Deer, Boulder Beach, and Seyon Lodge. It also has the Groton Nature Center, and eight lakes and ponds. The area once provided logs to 12 or more sawmills and remnants of some mills are still visible in the area.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had two camps in the forest, one at Rickers Pond and the other at Osmore Pond. The CCC crews constructed roads, trails, fire lookouts, and picnic shelters and planted hundreds of thousands of trees on the logged-over forestland from 1933 to 1941.

About 70 percent of the forest is under general management, 17 percent is under highly sensitive management (about one quarter of which is state-designated natural areas), 11 percent is designated special management, and 2 percent is intensive management.

Timber Harvest-Highlights: 22,784 acres (84% of the total) in the Groton Management Unit are classified for timber harvest. Specific management practices are as follows:

- 5,003 acres managed even aged on a hundred year rotation - 52 acres per year
- 16,236 acres managed uneven aged on a 20-year cutting cycle - 527 acres/year
- 719 acres of deer wintering habitat managed uneven aged
- 264 acres managed as grouse production areas
- 132 acres managed as mast producing areas
- 330 acres managed as snowshoe hare production areas.

Groton State Forest is also open for varied and dispersed recreation, including camping, hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, trapping, horseback riding, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. The Montpelier and Wells River Railroad bed was converted to a multi-use trail and is part of the Cross Vermont Trail. Snowmobiling is allowed on designated VAST trails.

The purpose of the CCC was to put thousands of young people to work restoring the nation's degraded forests, open lands, and waters. Along with the economic crisis of the Great

Depression, an environmental crisis was taking place. Much of the country's forests had been cleared, there were terrible floods, and the soil of the Great Plains was blowing away. As a 1941 government recruitment bulletin put it:

Today the need for conserving what is left of these riches is apparent on every hand. Scarred slopes where the timber has been ruthlessly cut or burned must be replanted. New forests must be grown and present forests protected from fire. Plains that once supported countless thousands of cattle must be re-vegetated, for the grass is about gone, and the dust rises in clouds. Fields that still yield must be protected from gnawing gullies and methods adopted to save the fertile topsoil. Areas must be developed in which nature and the pleasures of the outdoors may be retained for the enjoyment of all the people, always.

Males between the ages of 17 and 28 who were physically fit, unemployed, unmarried, and had a family in need of support were eligible for the CCC. Each Corps member received \$30 per month (about \$538 in today's dollars) and was required to send \$25 of his pay back to his family. Young men were selected by local welfare organizations (in Vermont, the determination was made by town overseers of the poor), then sent to U.S. War Department induction centers, where they were given medical exams, organized into 100-200 man companies, clothed, and equipped. A few women were hired as clerks to help run the camps. Later, Eleanor Roosevelt was successful in getting the federal government to establish work camps, known as She-She-She Camps, for jobless young women.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) worked to develop Groton State Forest and multiple state parks within the state forest. The CCC conducted reforestation work, developed trails and roads, and constructed campgrounds and shelters.

A developed campsite within the 26,000 acre Groton State Forest, Ricker Pond State Park was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In 1933, CCC Company 1217 from New York City was stationed at Ricker Mills and it was followed by Company 1162 in 1935. Ricker Pond was originally a picnic area with a log shelter, 10 picnic sites with stone fireplaces, and a staff

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cabin (rangers quarters). Where the current campsite #1 exists, you can find an 8' granite picnic table carved into the rock. In 1941, another small cabin was built, which is used today as a weekly rental cottage.

In Groton State Forest about 40 miles of foot trails were cut to provide better access for fire-fighting; today, these trails and the log lean-tos the CCC built along them are used extensively by hikers. Many more examples of the CCC's fine work can be found throughout Vermont's state parks and forests. Groton's Charles Lord, living in Stowe, was a CCC foreman who designed and oversaw the cutting of the first ski trails on Mount Mansfield, which are now part of Stowe Mountain Resort. Later, he worked for the ski area. In an interview conducted by the Vermont Historical Society, he recalled: "Most of the boys were pretty ravished when it came to lunch time. Some of the boys were too far away from camp to come back...to eat. Each one carried their own lunch. It consisted of four double sandwiches. I mean there would be eight slices of bread, plus a piece of cake or something."

At Osmore Pond the craftsmanship of the picnic shelter can be seen. The logs are notched and carefully fitted together at the corners of the building. Two-thirds of the structure is open-sided with railings; a stone fireplace and chimney stand at one end. A third of the building is enclosed and used for restrooms. The concrete floors were poured by CCC workers (and have since been restored by the State). The picnic tables inside include four made by the CCC, with a design distinct from the modern tables nearby. The Corps followed plans provided by the National Park Service, but with a different foreman for each crew, each building is a little different. CCC architecture is now the brand for Vermont's State Parks. It's quality is solid in appearance and structure, and built to last. The State is trying to replicate it in new construction. They take extreme care of CCC-built structures and work closely with the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. These structures are used today by hundreds of thousands of people.

GHS ON THE WEB

Have you visited the Groton Historical Society web page recently? It is easy to find at grotonvthistory.org where you will find minutes of the meetings, general information about the Society, news about current activities, how to contact the Society, and an archive of past newsletters from the first issue in the summer of 1988 to the present.

There are Groton Photos posted in several categories: Business, Groton High School Graduation, People, Post Cards, School, Sports, Town, Harbeson collection, Jesse Heath Powder Horn, and Blakeman collection. If you have pictures of Groton to share you can send them to the Society at grotonvthistory@gmail.com for posting on the webpage.

Historical resources that can be found on the webpage are Groton census records from 1790 to 1930 (note the 1940 census is available on the internet but is not yet posted on our webpage); Family Records of the families in the 1790 census: Abbott, Bailey, Darling (including John's son, Robards and son-in-law Timothy Townshend families), Hosmer, James, and Morse (New families in the 1800 census will be added soon); Veterans lists—War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korean Conflict, and Vietnam War; and cemetery listings for the old and new village cemeteries, Groton/Peacham cemetery, West Groton cemetery, Darling cemetery, and family burial grounds of Frost, Gray, Heath, McLaughlin, Renfrew and Whitcher.

.Other items posted on the site include short stories of the Sleeping Sentinel William Scott, and a number of stories by Waldo Glover: Fenton's Store, Tinker Jock, Spring Tonic, Sugaring Time, Smocks, Visiting, Grandfather's Hunt, Pasture Bars, and Male Quartette.

Be sure to check the webpage frequently to keep up with the current activities of the Groton Historical Society.

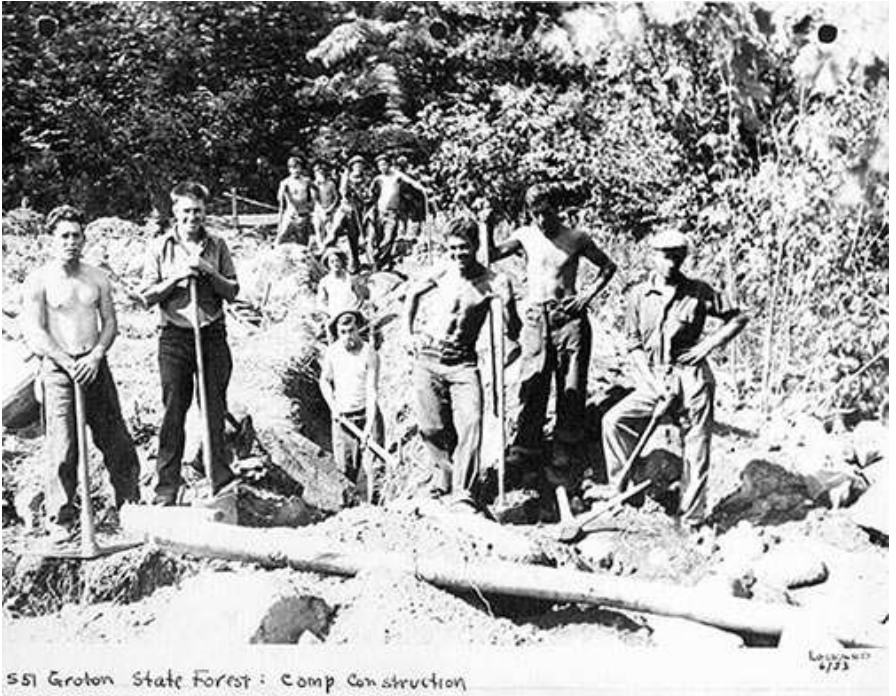
MEMBER DIRECTORY OF GHS 7/7/2017

Jacqueline Bailey 529 Vaughan Rd So. Ryegate, VT 05069 sulham@fairpoint.net
Willard Benzie 823 NW 7th St., Grand Rapids, MN 55744 jwbenzie@mchsi.com
David & Meroa Benjamin PO Box 438 Bradford, VT 05033 dpben@charter.net4
H. P & Mary Berlejung 2003 N. Co. Rd., Groton, VT 05046
hpaulberlejung@gmail.com
LaDonna Bicknell P. O. Box 241, Auburn, KS 66402 ladon219@yahoo.com
Mike & Sally Blair P.O. Box 26, Groton, VT 05046
Gracelyn R. Blaise 29 George St., Orange, VT 05644
Lois W. Boemig 243 Miller Drive, Ryegate, VT 05042
Pat Bouley P. O. Box 42, Ethel, MS 39067
Richard Brooks 50 Welton Rd., Groton, VT 05046 richardrobertw@charter.net
Peggy Ann Burgin 25 Clark Landing Apt. 2, Groton, VT 05046
Phyllis Burke 74 Powder Spring Rd, Groton, VT 05046 pceburke@fairpoint.net
Lorraine H. Carpenter P. O. Box 68Fruita, CO 81521
Harry & Judy Chandler, 1850 No. Co. Rd. Groton, VT 05046
chandlers@fairpoint.net
John Clark, 91 Maloney Rd., Williamstown, VT 05679
Eileen Corcoran, VT Hist. Ctr., Barre, VT 05641
eileen.corcoran@vermonthistory.org
Marietta Couture, 27 Wildwood Dr.Barre, VT 05641
Kathleen Creaser, 34 Skyview Terrace, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
creaser1@gmail.com
Robert N. Cross, 246 Peacham Rd Apt B1, Danville, VT 05878-8944
Rusty & Martha Crown, 232 Great Road, Groton, VT 05046
Stanley & Barbara Crown, 511 Mosquitoville Rd., Groton, VT 05046
Kathleen Crum, 4321 Scott Hwy, Groton, VT 05046 kcrum53@fairpoint.net
Roberta Dana, P. O. Box 5, Groton, VT 05046
Alice Daniels, 11 Mt. View Drive, Groton, VT 05046
Stephen Daniels, 3028 Old County Rd S., Waterford, VT 05819
stevedaniels@hotmail.com
Erin Darling 1194 Powder Spring Rd. Groton, VT 05046 erinlynn79@gmail.com
Leon & Brenda Darling 45 Birchwood Lane, Groton, VT 05046
Mirla Davison P. O. Box 527 South Barre, VT 05670
Joe Dennis 54 Mine Road, Bristol, CT 06010 agdennis@snet.net
Caroline Kitty Diggins 1138 Seyon Pond Rd, Groton, VT 05046
ktdid@fairpoint.net
L. Elizabeth Durovich, 1737 Pucker St., Stowe, VT 05672-4253
Lyle & Ellen Edwards, P. O. Box 44, Groton, VT 05046
Gary Eggleston, 1075 U.S. Rte. 302, East Barre, VT 05649
whiteturkeydog@yahoo.com
Charlotte Fadden, P. O. Box 427, North Haverhill, NH 03774
Durwood French, 2517 Kingsley Court, Chattanooga, TN 37421
Josephine French, 20085 Lynbrook Ln., Brooksville, FL 34601
jafrench16@yahoo.com
Charles Frost, P. O. Box 34, Groton, VT 05046 cdfrost@fairpoint.net

Sewell & Patsy Frost, 74 Mountain View Dr., Groton, VT 05046
Thelma Frost, 165 Hall Road, South Ryegate, VT 05069
Allen Gandin, P. O. Box 162, Groton, VT 05046
Greg Gandin, P. O. Box 103, Groton, VT 05046
Stuart W. Goodwin, P O Box 143, So. Ryegate, VT 0506 stuart85@fairpoint.net
Leroy Graham, 41 Hill St., Apt. 1, Barre, VT 05641
Corliss Bryce Greene, PO Box 790, Middleburgh, NY 12122-0790
fgreene@midtel.net
George Hall, P. O. Box 142, So. Ryegate, VT 05069 geohall71@earthlink.net
Kent & Joan Haskell, 173 Minard Hill Road, Groton, VT 05046-0144
Peter & Martha Haskell, 33 Ledgemere St., Burlington, VT 05401
phaskell@burlingtontelecom.net
Gayle D. Hatch, 95 Tree Top Estates, Woodsville, NH 03785
William Hodge, PO Box 64, Topsham, VT 05076
Kathleen Morse Jensen, 12201 261st Ave. E., Buckley, WA 98321
Susan Jones, P. O. Box 201, Monson, MA 01057
June Jorgensen, P. O. Box 535, Barre, VT 05641 hwjorge@aol.com
Deborah Jurist, 1346 Glover Rd., Groton, VT 05046 debjurist@gmail.com
Martin Klein, 4198 Scott Hwy, Groton, VT 05046 mpklein@verizon.net
Dorothy & Wayne Knott, P.O. Box 41, Groton, VT 05046
dorothy.knott@gmail.com
Diane Kreis, 389 Scott Hwy., Groton, VT 05046-5707 dianek@fairpoint.net
Kelley Kreis, 1320 Pioneer Rd #101, Crest Hill, IL 60435
kelleyannekreis@att.net
Shannon Kreis, 1716 Parkside Dr., Shorewood, IL 60431
Gary Lamberton, 50 Mt. View Rd., Groton, VT 05046 glamberton@charter.net
Lawrence & Kelly Luppi, 25 Ricker Mill Rd, Groton, VT 05046
irishwlfhndi@gmail.com
Jean Foster Malnati, 69 Main ST. Apt #5, Wells Rive, VT 05081
Floyd McDonald, 5 Lansdown Dr., Nashua, NH 03062
Dick & Martha Montague, P. O. Box 155, Groton, VT 05046-0155
Stephen Morrison, 1754 Atrium Dr., Sun City Ctr., FL 33573
scmimaging@gmail.com
Norman Morse, 415 Weld Road, Groton, VT 05046
George & Norma Murphy, PO Box 23, South Ryegate, VT 05069
Robert Murphy, 35 Birchwood Park Dr., Barre, VT 05641-8653
rmm@myfairpoint.net
Kathleen Norris, P O Box 10, Lyndon, VT 05849 kathynorris49@gmail.com
Linda Nunn, 2059 Scott Hwy, Groton, VT 05046 townclerk@grotonvt.com
Storme & Randy Odell, P.O. Box 704, Bradford, VT 05033
rsodell71@gmail.com
Deane & Bing Page, P. O. Box 22, Groton, VT 05046
MarjoriePage, 3009 Dartmouth Collage Hwy, No. Haverhill, NH 03774
mpagegram@charter.net
William & Earlene Palmer, P. O. Box 10, Lyndon, VT 05849
Stephen Perry, 356 Champions Ct. Avon Lake, OH 44012
swperry66@hotmail.com

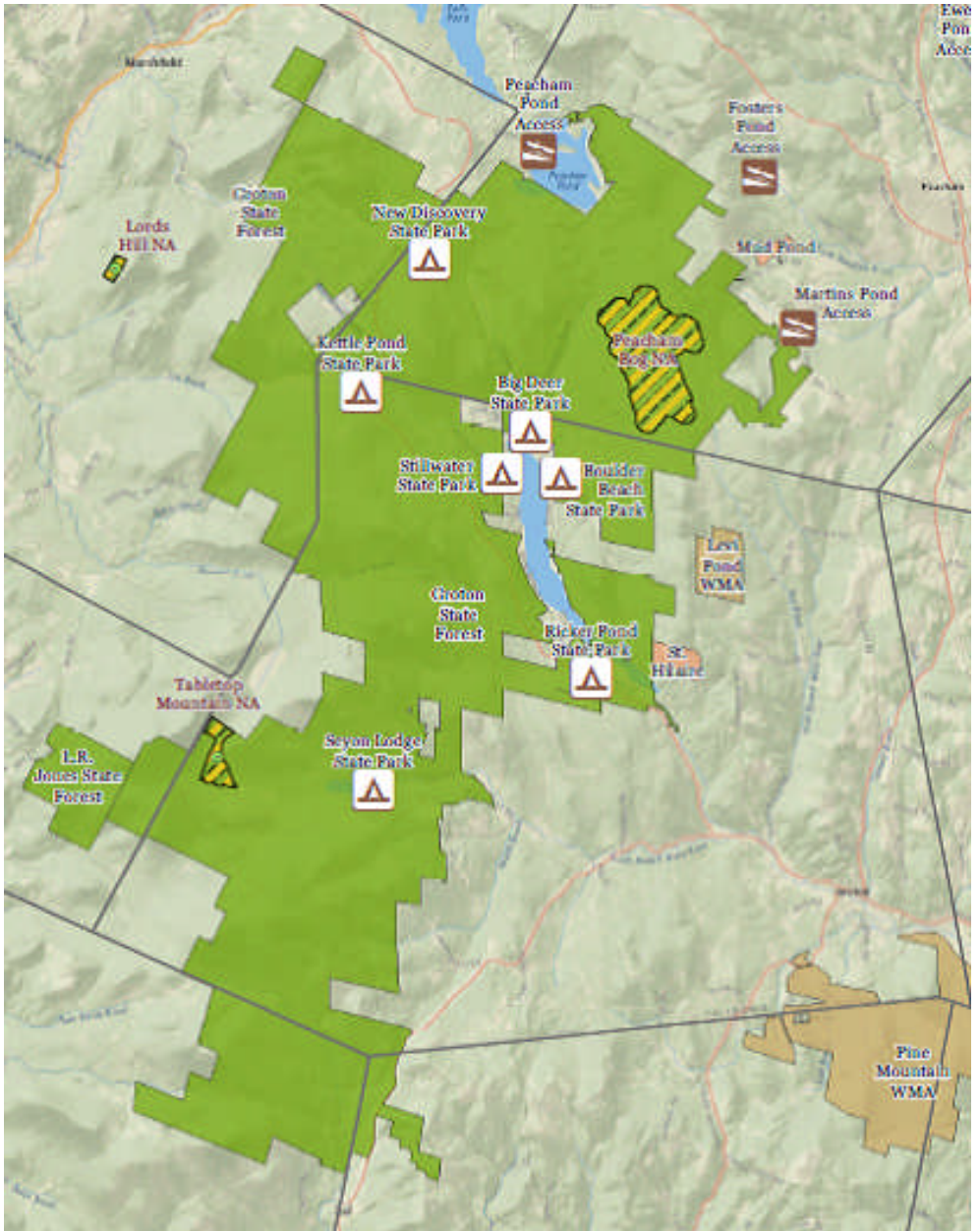
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CCC IN GROTON STATE FOREST



CCC crews at Groton State Forest constructed camp sites, roads, and trails; planted trees on logged forestland, thinned dense stands of young trees, and cut defective trees to improve the forest health.





From 2008 Management Plan for Groton Unit prepared by Agency of Natural Resources in Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation

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Eleanor Placey, 5810 Route 5, South Newbury, VT 05051

Charles & Shari Pollard, 257 Aspen Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016
ChPollard@aol.com

Clara Puffer, 182 Woodsville Rd., Monroe, NH 03771

David & Maria Puffer, 292 Tremont Street, Barre, VT 05641

Janet Puffer, 161 Little Italy Rd., Groton, VT 05046 Puffer70@msn.com

Matthew & Tracy Puffer, 366 Goodfellow Rd., Groton, VT 05046
tracypuffer@hotmail.com

Nathan & Merry Puffer, 2126A Scott Hwy, Groton, VT 05046
grotontimberworks@yahoo.com

Louise Reynolds, 7901 Park Crest Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20910
jlklar@verizon.net

Constance Ricker, P.O. Box 72, East Barre, VT 05649

Terrance Rielly, 573 Braxton Blvd Fayetteville, NC 28311-1043
tweetiesworkshop2@earthlink.net

Cheryl Sargent, 509 Scotchburn Drive, Groton, VT 05046
gram123@fairpoint.net

Patrick Shattuck, 1 Scenery Road, Pittsburg, PA 15221

Theresa Shepard, P. O. Box 187, Bradford, VT 05033

Carol Shields, 1632 Mountain Road, Vergennes, VT 05491

Sylvia McAllister Smedy, 35 Leonard Street, Barre, VT 05641
bsmedy@me.com

Alissa & Aaron Smith, 1480 Powder Spring Rd., Groton, VT 05046
pursiandrgrn@hotmail.com

Barry Smith, 605 Hill Street, Whitinsville, MA 01588

Brent & Pam Smith, 1714 Powder Spring Rd., Groton, VT 05046
psmith@nevaaa.org

Donald & Deborah Smith, 16 Jeremy River Dr. Colchester, CT 06415
DonSmith@donsmitty.com

Dwight A. Smith, 598 Intervale Crossroad, Intervale, NH 03845
geebud@roadrunner.com

Kenny Smith, 649 East 3rd Street, Unit 2, S. Boston, MA 02127
KJSMITH28@gmail.com

Robert Somaini, P. O. Box 302, East Barre, VT 05649

David Spencer, 194 Log Pile Lane, Groton, VT 05046
GLENRD21@earthlink.net

Robert Starr III, 621 Main St., Windsor, CT 06074 Bobstarvoffice@aol.com

Kimberley Stenson, 3118 Jones Ridge Dr., Charlotte, NC 28226
kstenson@carolina.rr.com

James L. Streeter, 64 Pleasant Street, Groton, CT 06340 jimstreetr@aol.com

Sharon (Morrison) Stumpf, 25F Minot St., Reading, MA 01867-3536
stumpfsh@msn.com

Altoon Sultan P. O. Box 2, Groton, VT 05046

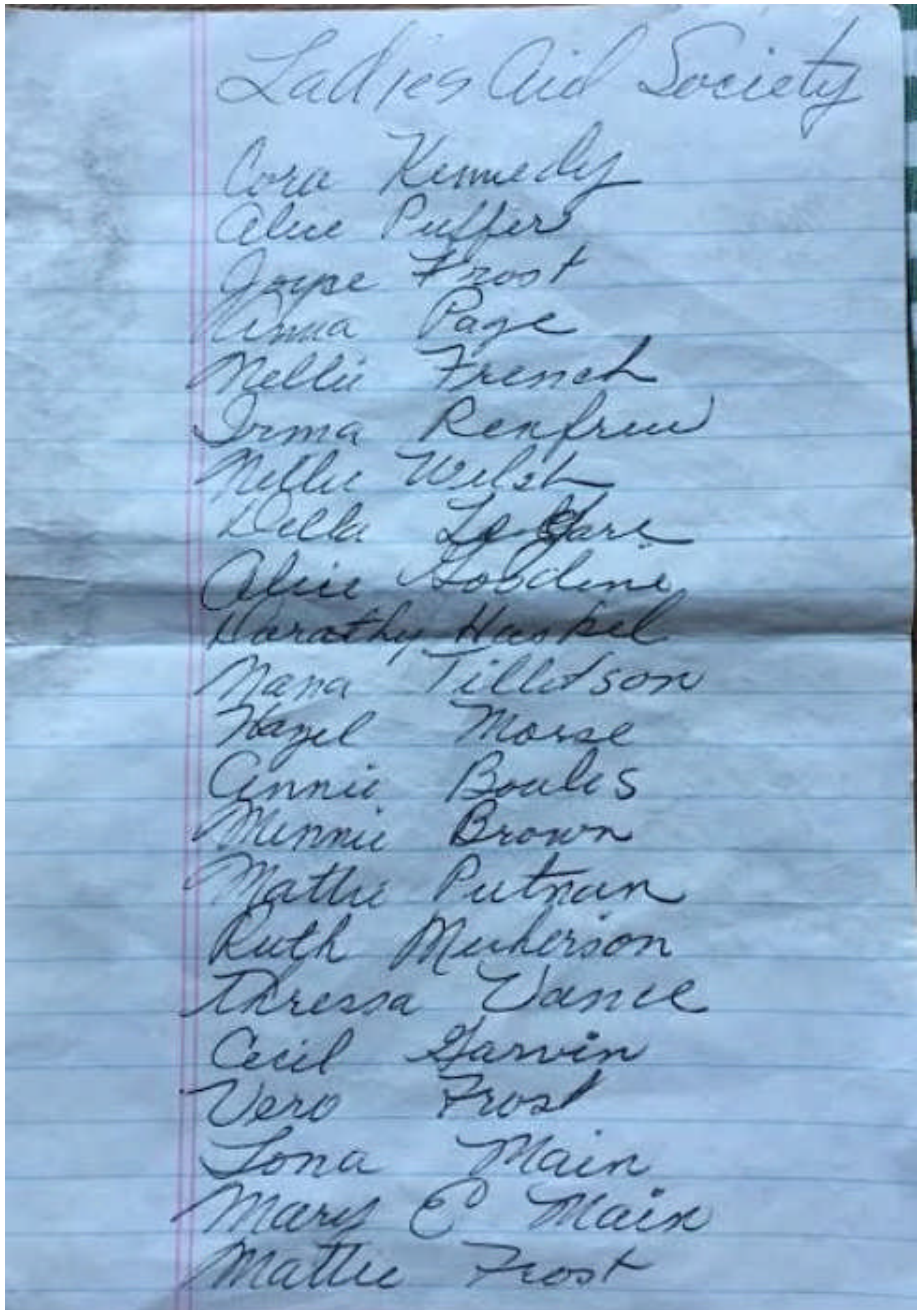
Judy Murray Thrasher, P. O. Box 49, Monument Beach, MA 02553-0049

Terri Tibbetts & Franklin Nichols, P.O. Box 618, Washington Depot, CT 06794

Nancy Vaughn, 148 Powerhouse Road, Groton, VT 05046
nancyvaughn35@yahoo.com

Erik Volk & Philip Coutu, 142 Hooper Hill Road, Groton, VT 05046
erikvolk@outlook.com
Lee Webb, 512 Veronica Rd., W. Chester, PA 19380 leewebby@verizon.net
Earlene Wetherbee, 1987 N. Bayley Hazen Road, E. Ryegate, VT 05042
earlandbernie@gmail.com
Reginald Welch, 5 Crescent Lane, Montpelier, VT 05602 regwelch@aol.com
Margaret Wenzel, 1331 Kellogg Avenue, Janesville, WI 53546-6021
m.wenzel@charter.net
Elizabeth Westerwelle, 7974 Westport Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32244
David Whitcher, P.O. Box 314, E. Barre, VT 05649 djwhitcher33@gmail.com
Ruth Whitcomb 304 State Forest Rd., Groton, VT 05046
Doreen White, 436 Pearlmont Road, Barnet, VT 05821 lydo90@hotmail.com
Cheryl Wilkenson, 137 N. Margolia St., Felismere, FL 32948
Lucille Winsor, P. O. Box 839, Lyndonville, VT 05851
Donna Wollschlager, 25 Fairway View Dr., Bristol, CT 06010
don43@comcast.net
Juliet Young, Serials Dpt., Bailey/Howe Library, UVM, Burlington, VT 05045

All members who provided an email address receive an advanced copy of the newsletter when it is sent to the printer. Twenty seven members have chosen to receive email copies only saving printing and mailing costs for the Society. Some other email copies of the newsletter have been undeliverable in the past, if you have provided an email address and not received an email copy of the newsletter, please check your email address in the directory to be sure it is correct. Also check your mailing address and send any corrections to GHS, P. O. Box 89, Groton, VT 05046 or email them to grotonvthistory@gmail.com thank you for your help.



Women of the Groton Ladies Aid Society about 1930

CAPITAL FUND DRIVE LETTER

Dear Friends,

The mission of the Groton Historical Society is to maintain and preserve the Peter Paul House, share the history of our town, and have fun doing it!

We had a ton of fun making donuts and sugar on snow together at the Peter Paul House April 1st. Our senior members have been teaching us a lot about the Groton of the past, and we are about to republish the Seth Eastman Civil War Journal. This book is a remarkable reminder of the dire consequences of a nation divided.

We are working on a photo display that will show before and after pictures from the archives collected by our founding members. It will document the huge amount of work that was done to restore our wonderful GHS home in Groton.

You may have a suspicion as to why we are writing to you, and if you guessed that we need money, you are right. We are looking at several repairs to the building in the coming months that are very necessary.

We have already taken care of many building problems. The furnace broke the day before the doughnut making party and Aaron Smith donated his time to install a new controller. Brent Smith donated time and materials to upgrade the wiring in the kitchen so we can now plug in grounded appliances. Prentis Pratt donated his time, both last year and this, to trim the cedars by the front door.

Now, the roof needs to be painted, the sign in the front is falling apart, and the security on the south side of the building, facing the river, badly needs to be better secured.

Our events and book sales have covered our operating expenses, such as insurance, newsletter mailing, and electricity, the Historical Society needs some help to cover the cost of building maintenance, and improvements!

*Any amount you can donate will be greatly appreciated and carefully spent. A single can of paint for the roof is \$50.00!

*Have you liked the GHS Facebook page? Search Facebook for Groton Vermont Historical Society.

*Do you check the website grotonvthistory.org for upcoming events!

*Do you have a story about Groton's past that you would like to share? Use the included form to share it!

We have something in the works for this fall that is going to be lots of fun! Stay tuned to find out what it will be!

Deborah Jurist, President

GROTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Visit GHS on the internet

Email: grotonvthistory@gmail.com

Web page: grotonvthistory.org

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

Highlights of May and June Meeting Minutes

May 2, 2017 Meeting called to order at 6:08 pm at the Peter Paul House in Groton, VT Members present-Deborah Jurist, Brent Smith, Janet Puffer, Sam Puffer, Phil Coutu, Erik Volk, Alissa Smith, Phyllis Burke and Peggy Burgin.

I. Officer Elections: President Deborah Jurist, Vice President Brent Smith, Secretary Philip Coutu, and Treasurer-Erik Volk.

II. Unfinished Business: Deb read minutes from last meeting in October 2016. Phyllis suggested hanging “before and after” renovation photos of each room in the Peter Paul House and all agreed it would be a nice addition. Deb suggested posting a framed appreciation for Janet and Harold Puffer, similar to the Page and French recognitions. Brent explained about getting access to the state 911 map which shows much more detail. Brent will ask Matt Nunn if his estimate is a firm price for painting the roof. Sam Puffer suggested sealing the chimney also

III. Financial Report: check book balance 1/1/2017—\$3,306.03; revenue—\$876.47; expenses—\$1,082.93; check book balance 5/2/2017—\$3,099.57. savings certificate balance—\$9,961.91. Deb reported it costs about \$3000 a year to run Peter Paul House (including taxes, electricity, insurance, etc.). Erik offered to look into non-profit status of GHS. Janet Puffer is the GHS agent.

IV. Correspondence: Alissa reported we received donations of historic photos and post cards. She also went over other items that we got in the mail. Deb volunteered to prepare a thank you letter template and will mail out letters to recent donors of items to GHS.

V. New Business Erik suggested we have more open houses—Quarterly? Deb asked about getting more volunteers to help with things like events, mailings, light repairs, newsletter, genealogy etc. Names suggested as possible volunteers were Deb Johnson, Carla Johnson, Chris Stock, Kirsten Murch, Martha Montague, students, Brenda Powers, Ellen Cady, Linda Nunn.

VI. Fundraising Casino night? Erik is looking into legality of casino night. We would not be bringing in/renting a lot of games ..e.g. cards Poker, Black Jack etc. Erik reported that the project of transcribing Seth Eastman’s book on the Civil War is close to completion. Hopefully it will be done in June 2017. Deb reported that Mr. Glover’s Childhood Stories project needs to be completed. .

Philip Coutu, Secretary

June 6, 2017 Meeting called to order at 6:04 pm. Present: Deborah Jurist, Brent Smith, Erik Volk, Philip Coutu, Janet Page, Janet Puffer, Phyllis Burke, Alissa Smith, Sandra Cirone, Dick Montague, Martha Montague, Judy Chandler, Harry Chandler.

Sign at Peter Paul House: Dick Montague volunteered to repair the sign and will take it home to do so.

Donations: Sandy Cirone who grew up in Groton donated a sewing table, and quilt with signatures of woman from Groton. Deb Jurist motioned to accept donations, seconded by Phil Coutu. Phyllis Burke will work with Sandy to provide descriptions and more history on items. Erik Volk and Janet Page will bring table to PPH. Deb circulated latest version of a Donation Agreement for discussion.

Facility-We need shades or curtains for a couple of windows in basement. Phyllis will purchase shades.

Treasures Report: May 2—June 6, Income—\$10.00, expenses—\$471.35 ending balance—\$2,638.22. Erik switched bank account to his name from Dean Page. Phil moved to add Deb J to bank account and 2nd by Alissa. Alissa moved to receive statements electronically, seconded by Phil. Erik reported we have a copy of our tax exempt letter/cert. Our new website was paid for by Erik the first year and is now up for renewal (domain and hosting, \$ 90). Decided to keep site on Godaddy.com Phil moved to accept treasures report seconded by Alissa. Brent suggested President and Treasurer sign report and file with minutes.

On going projects/Events/Fundraising-Deb J. and Erik discussed a road rally, similar to a scavenger hunt in cars. Each car pays to enter the race. Mileage is noted and they figure out shortest route in order to win. They look for clues at various sites. A gathering/party at the end/cookout. Janet Page will bring it to the Recreation Committee for possible help with the event. Possible dates discussed Sept 22nd or Oct 14th? Tabled to hear back from Janet P about rec committee thoughts. Will be main fundraiser for this year. Need to come up with places to stop and record. Graveyards, schoolhouses, quarry, foundations. Phyllis brought up time frame? Sell snacks and water beforehand. Sell items after. Fire Dept. can do their grilled chicken after?

Phil brought up the possibility of doing a Montpelier/Wells River Railroad presentation by Dwight Smith as an event? Sell books?

Seth Eastman's Civil War Journal. Erik Volk got a couple of proofs from printer. Overall general approval. Erik thanked all who volunteered and said he and Deb J are adding Eastman Genealogy and name index.

Capital campaign letter. Have it in newsletter and sent out to individuals too. Plan to mail letter by next meeting

Phil moved to adjourn seconded by Erik. Meeting adjourned 7:30 pm
Philip Coutu, Secretary

Groton Historical Society Newsletter
Editor jwbenzie@mchsi.com
P. O. Box 89
Groton, VT 05046-0089

