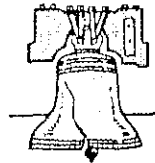


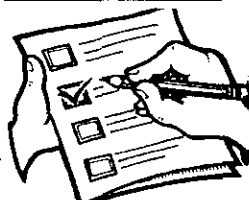
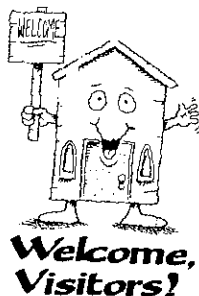
The Groton Historical Society



NEWSLETTER

GROTON, VERMONT

SUMMER 1995



The Annual election of Officers of The Groton Historical Society was held on Tuesday, July 11th.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| President: | Janet Puffer |
| Vice President: | Norma Hosmer |
| Secretary: | Evelyn Ricker |
| Treasurer: | Josephine French |
| Co-signer: | Dale Brown |

Board of Directors:

Consists of the 4 elected officers and:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Willard Benzie | Term expires 1996 |
| Deane Page | Term expires 1997 |
| Richard Brooks | Term expires 1998 |

Board of Trestees:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Walter Main | Term expires 1996 |
| Richard Brooks | Term expires 1997 |
| Willard Benzie | Term expires 1998 |
| Deane Page | Term expires 1999 |
| Norma Hosmer | Term expires 2000 |

We all express our thanks and appreciation to Alice Goodine for her many years of service as she steps down from the office of President. She will continue as an active member of the Society.

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The Groton Historical Society House

Route 302 - Groton, Vt.



Will Be Open Sundays From 2 - 5 P.M.
Starting July 2 Thru August 26.

Our Theme Will Be The Great Depression Of The 1930's.

If You Have Things You Might Loan, We'd Love To Use Them. We Hope You Will Stop By And Share Your Memories Of That Era.



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

SHEEP RAISING

In the self-sufficient economy of the pioneer period the problem of adequate clothing was second only to that of food. We have seen that the flax field was the source of linen clothing for the summer months. It remained for the flock of sheep to produce wool for winter clothing, the only supplement being the skins of wild animals. Hence as soon as possible the pioneer farmer started his flock of sheep, sometimes by buying a lamb or two and paying for them in labor; sometimes by renting sheep from farmers with large flocks in the earlier settled neighboring towns. For the beginner the care of sheep was more difficult than the care of cows, due to inadequate fencing for one thing. He could put his mark on his cow's ear, hang a bell on her neck, and turn her loose with the expectation of seeing her again at the end of day. If he wanted to keep her in reasonable bounds he would fell trees around a given piece of land in such a way that an effectual barrier would be made. But only a more carefully made fence would suffice for his sheep which, even then, would be exposed to the ravages of bears, wolves, and wild cats. No wonder then that the grand list of 1803 records forty-six of the fifty landowners as having one or more cows while only twenty-seven had one or more sheep.

As the family's winter clothing depended on a supply of wool to be carded, spun and woven by the womenfolk of the household it follows that those who raised little or no wool would have to exchange other products which they could make or raise, or their personal services, for some of the surplus wool of their neighbors. Two examples may be cited: Jacob Hatch with two sheep, was a shoemaker as well as a farmer; and Josiah Paul with his one lone sheep was a fine cabinet-maker as well as a farmer. Hatch's shoes made in spare time, and Paul's chairs,

tables and looms - also made in odd hours - were excellent media of exchange for wool or any other product which they themselves lacked and their neighbors had in abundance. As for the recently married pioneer who had no sheep at all, and hence no wool for his bride to card, spin and weave, it may be assumed that with two strong hands and a rugged constitution he could easily find work with his more wealthy neighbors in helping to clear land and build their stone fences.

The story of the wool industry in Groton is similar to that of the state as a whole. The invention of the carding machine and power looms followed by construction of woolen mills on water power sites on the rivers of southern New England created a demand for wool which could be produced advantageously in northern New England. So Groton in common with other Vermont towns moved out of the subsistence level of 1800 in wool production, to the commercial level of the twenties and thirties. By 1840 sheep raising, especially for wool production, was the leading interest of the Groton farmer. Incidentally, the food value of sheep was also considerable. Mutton (not lamb) was commonly seen on the Groton farmer's table, but it never was as important as beef or pork since it does not lend itself so readily to any curing process. Notwithstanding, the foreign competition which resulted from the removal of the tariff on high grade wool in 1846, and the domestic competition of western wool made possible by ever improving transportation facilities, sheep raising was carried on in Groton, quite generally to the seventies, when it was superseded in importance by dairying, and became only an incidental interest to the end of the century.

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The benefit of work

Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work and forced to do your best will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and contentment, and a hundred virtues which the idle never know.