



# Pownal Gateway

Pownal Historical Society, Inc.

February 2008

Vol. 6 No. 3



## CONTENTS

President's Message	1
Grandma Tells a Tall One	2
Upcoming Meetings	3
One Small Discovery	4
Quotes from the Past	4
Tracing Your Family Line	5
Genealogy Project	6

## Upcoming Meetings

**Sunday, March 2, 2 p.m.**

Re-enacting the  
American Revolution  
Pownal Library

**April --Annual Meeting**

(date to be announced)

**Saturday, April 26**

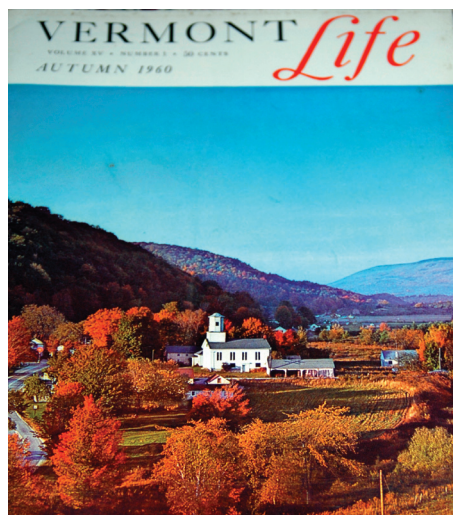
**9:00 a.m.**

**Vermont Archaeology  
Society**

Bennington Museum

## Pride in Pownal Past

*Vermont Life* featured this beautiful picture of Pownal Centre in its Autumn 1960 issue. The people of Pownal were proud of their villages, farms, and countryside then and still remain proud of them. But, as Ken Held notes below, we can easily lose the traces of the past and the lives of those who have gone before if we do not work to preserve what they worked to give us.



## President's Message

from Ken Held

Hello to Fellow Historians. After all, isn't that what we all are, historians? We capture stories from the past and pass them on to the future. We do this by sharing stories and family histories with our children. We attend programs where others share their knowledge of the past with us so we may have a deeper sense of this world we live in.

Along with this knowledge we are reminded of our history and the town we live in every time we pass by an older home or building or look out over our Pownal Valley. We can't help but be reminded of the rich history our town owns. Today, as you travel around Pownal, take a look at the old homes, farms and buildings. Think of the history in those buildings. How many people called it "home," how many new babies came home to live there, and how many people put their hearts into that building to make it something they were proud of? As historians, every time we walk along a Pownal road, we must wonder who else walked this path a hundred, two hundred or more years ago. What were they thinking, did they ever think about those who would come after them and walk the same path, looking at the same buildings and homes? As historians we must think not only of the past, but of the future and what we will be leaving for those who come after us and walk our paths. We need to protect our history so our future generations can enjoy the beauty that we sometimes take for granted.

Continued on page four.

# Grandma Tells a Tall One

by Ted Atkinson

My mother's mother--her name was Hannah Carpenter (Green) Holt--was a remarkable woman. When in her 80s she was interviewed by a reporter from *The Bennington Banner*, he wrote that her hearing and eyesight were excellent, her mind very sharp. However, his article about the Carpenters of Carpenter Hill contained fourteen errors, small errors, but mistakes nevertheless. For example, the Carpenters didn't come from Cape Cod, Reynolds Carpenter didn't have twelve children, but thirteen, and the like.

I think there were reasons for the mistakes. Jeremiah, Joshua and Reynolds had thirty-three kids. Through marriage they aligned themselves with Pratts, Gardners, Brownells, Eldreds, Niles, Greens and Paddocks. It was confusing, don't you think? Furthermore, Hannah Green grew up not in Pownal, but in Petersburg. She went to school in Andover, Mass., and met her future husband there, Edgar Holt, living much of the remainder of her life Boston and Hartford, Conn. Her mother was the 13th child of Reynolds, but Hannah didn't always get the stories straight, sharp as she was.

So, here's the story she told--to me and her two daughters--not exactly true. Reynolds Carpenter married two Niles sisters, Mary and Hannah, from Shaftsbury. Mary died in childbirth with her sixth child. A frequent visitor was her sister Hannah from Shaftsbury, who came to the house in Pownal with her three young children--no father ever mentioned. Reynolds, soon after the death of Mary, married Hannah. Grandma implied that her children were the illegitimate children of Reynolds and Hannah. That's the whole story in a nutshell.

How did Grandma put that together? Who were the real parents of the three children? How frequently and easily did Hannah travel from Shaftsbury to Pownal, not a short trip in those days?

We need a very educated guess and a lot of family research, don't you think?

Two principal families on Carpenter Hill were Eldreds and Carpenters, the Eldreds on the Pownal side, the Carpenters on the Bennington. The Carpenters arrived in 1770, the Eldreds at the time of the Battle in 1777. In time the two families intermarried, and the geographic separation ended. In chronological order, Daniel Eldred's son Mumford married Ruth Carpenter, a daughter of Joshua and Margaret Carpenter. Margaret, after the death (smallpox?) of Joshua in 1794, married widower Daniel Eldred. Then, Reynolds bought the 300 acre farm of Daniel in Pownal.

The Carpenter homestead was where the apple barns are now, on the sweeping S curve along the road. Mumford and Ruth lived on the north side of the Eldred Cemetery, now Cottrell's farm.

Back to the story. Mumford and Ruth had three children before she died. Mumford with other Eldred men went land-hunting in Michigan near Kalamazoo. For safe-keeping he gave his three children to Ruth's mother, Margaret Carpenter, then a widow. With kids in tow, Margaret would visit Daniel, their grandfather, up the road. Soon they married.

So, Hannah Holt had a piece of it, but a small piece. And grandma confused Ruth's children with Hannah's.

How might we understand such confusion? In more recent times, a resident of "Evergreen Farm" in Petersburg told me that, although she had lived most of her life there, she had been to Carpenter Hill only twice in her life. Imagine my grandmother trying to get the story straight while living in Boston and Hartford. With automobiles, telephones and e-mails, today distance shrinks. And research is easier and better.



## Upcoming Meetings

### Sunday, March 2 -- Re-Enacting the American Revolution

On Sunday, March 2nd, at 2 p.m., in the Solomon Wright Public Library in Pownal, Vermont, the Pownal Historical Society will present: "Re-enacting the American Revolution," a talk by Ed Miano, a professor at MCLA, and Mary Ann Stickney. The speakers will talk about such topics as learning to be a re-enactor, preparing for a reenactment, reenacting battles and the lives of people during the American Revolution, and learning about life during that time. This event is open to the public. For more information, call 802-823-0198.

**April Annual Meeting:** Watch for a notice in your mail.

### Saturday, April 26 – Vermont Archaeology

On this date, the Vermont Archaeological Society will hold its annual spring statewide meeting at the Bennington Museum. Speakers from across New England will address a variety of archaeological topics relevant to Vermont. There is a small registration fee that includes lunch. For registration information, go to: <http://www.vtarchaeology.org/cms/events>

Pre-registration for the Spring meeting is \$20 for VAS members and \$24 for non-members. Fee includes morning coffee & bagels and lunch (varied meat and veggie sandwiches, salad, cookie, & drinks). Registration must be received at least one week before the meeting date to reserve lunch. As of this publication, the event is tentatively scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



**Reenactors at the Battle  
of Saratoga (above)  
and the Battle of Bennington**





# One Small Discovery at a Time

## Submitted by Anson Mason

Sometimes questions we have about our ancestors come in small discoveries. So it was when Anson Mason's daughter Jane found a passport application and then a passenger list through **Ancestry.com**.

Anson had wondered what had happened to Elijah B. Mason, who, following his father Chester, had owned a store on Centre Street in Pownal Center, next to the old Masonic Temple (see the 1869 Beers Atlas map of Pownal Center), about where Gert McIver's home now stands.

Then Elijah sold the store and moved west, but Anson could not discover where. Anson's daughter found the answer in a passport application of 1919, where Elijah's son Edgar applies for a passport to sail with his wife Selina Adelia Mason, who was born Selina Myers in Pownal on April 29, 1861. The application reveals that he lived in Brookfield, Missouri, answering what Anson had been wondering about. Anson and his daughter also learned that they travelled on the *Nippon Maru* to visit a daughter in Manila, visited Japan and China, and then returned to San Francisco on the *S.S. Santa Cruz*.



1869 Beers Map of Pownal

## Quotes from the Past

Submitted by Joyce Held

From the Town of Pownal 1897 Annual Report:

Superintendent's Report by A. D. Clark and E. L. Arnold, Superintendents of Schools

"We would urge parents to visit often the schools where their children are being instructed. You would not leave your flock of sheep entirely to the care of others. You would occasionally visit them to see how they are prospering. The education of your children is of vastly greater importance than many sheep. Visit the schools. Go, not to find fault, but in a spirit of encouragement and helpfulness."

## President's Message, cont'd

Pownal is full of history, but sadly we are losing a piece of it every day. We see homes and barns falling down; we drive by the spot of old colonial home and notice that it's been torn down, only existing now in our memories. We understand all about progress and that change is good, but some change takes away a piece of history that can't be restored. We want to capture these links to our past and preserve them. We, as historians must educate those around us about the importance of our heritage. We must encourage our fellow Vermonters to preserve their homes and farms. The Pownal Historical Society has talked about this at length and is taking the first step by learning more on what a Historic District is, what it entails to have an area named a state historic district and what impact it would have those living in the area. It's a small step, we don't know where it will lead, but it is a step that shows that as historians we are thinking about those that will walk along our paths long after we're gone.



## To Begin



Begin with your parents and their parents and go back one generation at a time. Don't skip; don't guess; don't start with some illustrious person in the 1700's and move forward to the present. Where were your parents born? When? Who were their parents? When and where did they marry? List if you can all the children's names. Quiz your entire family, your older siblings, your aunts and uncles. If the answers are uncertain, consult appropriate Town Clerks, remembering that Town Clerk's are very important people. Always treat them in a mannerly way, short of sending them Valentines. A certified copy of an event will cost you several dollars, but the information alone will usually be free, unless much time was spent in digging. Self-addressed stamped envelopes are the rule if you want them to mail you materials.

## ~~9999~~ The Census and New England Handbook

The federal census comes out every ten years, with printing beginning in 1790 and ending in 1930. Until 1850, only the head of household was named. Other family members, no names, were arranged by age. Many libraries, including the Bennington Museum library, have hardback indices, 1790-1850, covering the New England states. The National Archives in Pittsfield has such indices for all states. The 1850 census was the first one to list all family members, a practice which has continued. An indispensable tool is a booklet entitled *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research*, edited by Marcia D. Melnyk, and published by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116-3007. Cost: \$19.95. This excellent resource is filled with invaluable material, such as (by state) a list of towns (when founded), libraries, vital records (source of), cemetery records, probate and land, church records, newspapers. All major libraries have this booklet.

## Print Sources of Genealogical Information

**Massachusetts:** Of the 364 towns in the Commonwealth, 206 are covered since 1850 by hardback books published in the early 1900s. They are called the "official series." Both the Museum and the Athenaeum have these books. Some town records not in this series were copied by Jay Mack Holbrook and are also found in back issues of the *Mayflower Descendant* (Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable counties).

**Connecticut:** The "Barbour Collection" covers all Connecticut towns to about 1850 (on film). It is in two forms: 1) town by town or 2) alphabetical by name. For information after 1850, consult the Town Clerk for any given town, or possibly the Mormon IGI, which I will write about later. Both the Museum and the Athenaeum have the Barbour Collection.

**Vermont:** Both the Bennington Museum Library and the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield have Vermont vital records on 16mm film, the Museum to 1946, the Athenaeum to 1908. The records began in 1760 and are the most complete in the U.S., i.e., all 251 town are included. (The General Services Center of Vermont is in Middlesex (Route 2), phone 802-828-3286. Vital records are \$7 per copy.) (Continued on page six)



## How to Trace a Family Line, Part I (cont'd)

**New Hampshire:** The original records of every town are on film at the State Library in Concord. The Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics on Hazen Dr. in Concord 03301 (603-271-4654) charges \$.50/ page for photo-copies and \$10.00/search by mail. Staffed by volunteers.


The Athenaeum, the public library of Pittsfield, is open Monday through Saturday. The Bennington Museum Library is open summers Monday through Saturday, and winters Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday afternoon, one to five. If in doubt, always call ahead. There is no charge to use either the Athenaeum or the Bennington Museum Library, but at the Museum there is an entrance fee of \$6.

[Ed. Note: Ted will be writing an article on various steps of tracing your genealogy in our forthcoming newsletters. If you have particular questions about the process that you would like him to address in a future article, let him know: [tedanne@verizon.net](mailto:tedanne@verizon.net) ]

## Genealogy Project

Charlie Clark continues to work with anyone having or needing information on their genealogies connecting them to early Pownal families. He is building records in our library's computer files. In particular, he invites contributions for the following:

Family names still to be added to the data base at the Solomon Wright Library include Aylesworth, Clark (Ithamar), Curtis, Downer, Grover, Hoxie, Mason, and Wright. These are genealogies primarily taken from late 1800 published genealogies. They need considerable work with documentation and updates from their time in Pownal and subsequent migration. Any connection of Pownal families to the Colonial period are welcome. Names of special interest include Bass, Morgan, and Welch. Family links to existing Pownal families are needed for Blood and Blanchard, as well as Poppleton and Turner—names of families that moved away. Corrections, additional information, and further documentation are welcome, as is any information on families that we do not have in our data base. Contact Charlie Clark at [ccclark2440@yahoo.com](mailto:ccclark2440@yahoo.com).

Officers	Pownal Historical Society, inc. P.O. Box 313 Pownal, VT 05261	Our Goals
<b>Ken Held, President</b> <b>Fran Lampman, Vice President</b> <b>Charlotte Comar, Treasurer</b> <b>Wendy Hopkins, Secretary</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Raise public awareness of Pownal's history: its founding fathers and its early inhabitants.</b></li><li>• <b>Stimulate our children's interest in the history of Pownal.</b></li><li>• <b>Gather and preserve historical data and artifacts.</b></li><li>• <b>Share with other communities data relevant to their history.</b></li></ul>
<b>Board Members</b>  <b>Ted Atkinson, Programs</b> <b>Charles Clark</b> <b>Joyce Held</b> <b>Margaret Lillie</b> <b>Jeanne Overstreet, Membership</b> <b>Raymond Rodrigues, Newsletter</b>  <b>Website: <a href="http://www.pownal.org">www.pownal.org</a></b> <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:pownal@comcast.net">pownal@comcast.net</a></b>	<b>Thomas Pownall</b>	

